

THE BATMAN

Revised First Draft Screenplay

by

Tom Mankiewicz

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FADE IN:

SUPERIMPOSED ON A BLACK SCREEN:

WAYNE MANOR, NEAR GOTHAM CITY - 1960

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - SUNSET

A beautiful, sprawling suburban estate at sunset. Classic wrought-iron gates protect a winding driveway which snakes its way up through a neatly manicured lawn.

INT. WAYNE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ALFRED PENNYWORTH, the Wayne family butler, fluffs up a cushion in the large, elegant living room. A kind-looking man in his late forties with dark moustache and hair, he epitomizes the proper British moor domo, dressed in a morning coat and striped vest.

Alfred turns, straightens up a pile of thick-looking papers on the living room table. He picks up the top one, looks at it critically, but with satisfaction.

INSERT SHOT - CAMPAIGN POSTER

The thick-looking papers are, in fact, political campaign posters. They feature the face of a handsome, fortyish man, with the block lettered caption: DR. THOMAS WAYNE FOR CITY COUNCIL - A BETTER TOMORROW FOR GOTHAM.

DR. WAYNE'S VOICE

Bruce? Hurry up, son, we're going to be late. Martha?

BACK TO SCENE

Alfred turns to look at DR. THOMAS WAYNE (the man on the poster) enters the room.

DR. WAYNE (CONT'D)

Now where's Martha? Alfred, have you seen Mrs. Wayne?

ALFRED

I believe she was headed for Master Bruce's laboratory. Sir.

Dr. Wayne checks his watch, exits, muttering.

DR. WAYNE

That nymphomaniacal hamster of his must have given birth again...

INT. HALLWAY

Dr. Wayne heads down the hallway towards a door.

DR. WAYNE
Come on, everybody, the movie starts
in less than an hour. Let's not
keep you next city councilman
waiting...

INT. BRUCE'S LAB

Dr. Wayne opens the door. The makeshift lab room has a large work table crammed with beakers, test tubes, and other scientific equipment. BRUCE WAYNE, aged ten, sits behind a microscope, peers down intently at a specimen on a slide. He does not look up as his father enters.

DR. WAYNE
(crossing)
Son, whatever you're looking at
couldn't possible be as pretty as
Audrey Hepburn, so...

Dr. Wayne puts his hand on Bruce's shoulder. Incredibly enough - it passes right through it! He recoils, shocked, reaches out to touch the body's head. His hand cuts right through the skull. Giggling is HEARD, O.S.

Young Bruce stands behind the door with his mother, MARTHA, a beautiful woman in her mid-thirties.

BRUCE
It's called a "holograph," dad. Two
Interconnecting laser beams...
(pointing)
There and there. Pretty neat, huh?

Dr. Wayne stares at the laser tubes, totally nonplussed.

MARTHA
Well, don't look at me. My side
of the family still can't figure out
why it gets dark at night. Ready to
go?

DR. WAYNE
(eyes narrowing)
How can I be sure you're the real
thing?

Martha kisses him warmly. He looks back, impressed.

DR. WAYNE (CONT'D)
Somewhat lifelike, I'll admit...

MARTHA
That's all? Then hold on to your
socks, buster...

She kisses him again with passion. Bruce turns away with the typical

self-consciousness of a pre-adolescent.

BRUCE
Oh, guy...

His parents break. Dr. Wayne looks down at him.

DR. WAYNE
Bruce, you may be the brightest ten year old in Gotham City, or anywhere else, for that matter. But I feel I ought to let you in on something.

(at Martha)
This - is definitely not a guy.

INT. PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT

A huge 35mm motion picture projector springs to life.

INT. THEATER

The shifting colored rays of a projected film knife though the blackness of the theater.

SCREEN VOICE
Sister, you make a beautiful nun.

ANGLE ON MOVIE SCREEN

The screen is filled by the face of AUDREY HEPBURN, dressed as a nun. We are watched The Nun's Story, as are:

ANGLE ON WAYNE FAMILY IN SEATS

Dr. Wayne, Martha, and Bruce, who downs the remains of his box of Good and Plenty.

EXT. GOTHAM MOVIE THEATER & STREET - NIGHT

Rumblings of distant thunder echo through the night sky. The Wayne family exits the theater, heads down a deserted street. Suddenly - a flash of lightning. A closer, louder clap of thunder. Dr. Wayne takes Martha's arm. Bruce straggles behind, staring at the pavement.

DR. WAYNE
I wish I hadn't parked so far away.
We're going to get soaked.

MARTHA
(over her shoulder)
Do try and keep up, Bruce. What on earth are you staring at, anyway?

BRUCE
The cracks, Mom. It's bad luck to step on one.

(does so)
Oh, darnit...

VOICE (O.S.)
Hold it, you people. Freeze!

A large man (JOE CHILL) partially hidden by shadows, points a gun at them. He stands in the sunken entrance to a deserted brownstone house, gestures with his weapon.

CHILL
Get down in here. Now.

MARTHA
(terrified)
Thomas...

DR. WAYNE
You're welcome to our money.
Anything we have. Okay?

Chill stares coldly. Dr. Wayne pulls out his money, takes off his watch. Martha and Bruce watch, petrified.

DR. WAYNE (CONT'D)
Here...just be careful with that gun, will you? It could go off...

CHILL
You know something, Doc? You're right.

DR. WAYNE
(expression changing)
Doc? How did you know I was a...

There is a deafening roar as Chill fires the gun, lifting Dr. Wayne off his feet, hurling him backwards.

BRUCE
Daddy!!

Martha screams. A bolt of lightning flashes. Chill turns.

CHILL
Let's have that necklace, lady...

MARTHA
Oh, my God!

Martha tries to escape but is jerked back by Chill's hand as it closes on her necklace. Bruce runs at Chill, grabs him by the leg, tries to pull him down.

BRUCE
Leave my mommy alone! Mommy!
Mommy!

Chill fires again! The necklace snaps free as Martha is jerked backwards, then crumples next to her husband.

CLOSE ON BRUCE

He kneels over his mother's body, pauses in shock, then looks up: the barrel of Chill's gun comes into frame.

CLOSE ON CHILL

The necklace in one hand, his gun in the other. He looks down at Bruce, his expression suddenly changing.

BACK TO BRUCE

He stares at Chill, his jaw inadvertently twitching with rage. A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER rolls across the sky. Bruce's eyes have become steel, visible fury shooting forth from them in an almost demonic fashion.

Chill's gun hand suddenly starts to tremble. Incredibly, the savage face of this young boy has unnerved him.

CHILL

Stop...lookin' at me like that, kid...

(no response)

Stop looking at me like that!

Suddenly - A FLASH OF LIGHTNING! Rain begins to fall in sheets. Chill, runs up to the street, disappears into the rain-swept darkness.

ANGLE ON APARTMENT BUILDING

LIGHTS have flicked on in the apartment building across the street. FACELESS WITNESSES stand silhouetted in the windows, gazing down at the tragedy across the street.

CAMERA PUSHES IN on one particular window. A SHADOWY FIGURE half-emerges from the darkness, his face still hidden from us. All that is visible is an oversized pair of striped pants and a large white daisy stuck through the coat lapel. The Shadowy Figure pauses, then reaches out an arm and slowly lowers the window shade.

From behind the shade - an insane, maniacal giggle starts to rise. Tiny at first, but gradually building to a sudden explosion of cascading, frightening glee!

BACK TO BRUCE

Kneeling in the rain across the street, paralyzed with shock and grief. He looks up from the bodies of his parents as a COUPLE approaches along the pavement above.

BRUCE'S VOICE

Help...oh, please help me...

The couple stop, stare down at the scene.

BRUCE
It's...my mom and dad. Please...I
think they're dead.

The couple exchange a quick, horrified glance, then hurry off down the street.

BACK TO BRUCE

Sobbing uncontrollably now, tears mixing with the rain. In the distance: the low whine of an approaching siren. CAMERA RISES into the night sky:

A FLASHING BOLT OF LIGHTNING RIPS ACROSS THE SCREEN: the residue remains in the night sky - a searing yellow dot. ANOTHER BOLT OF LIGHTNING - another yellow dot. Then a deafening clap of thunder as the gray-black clouds arrange themselves into a dark and eerie silhouette. The siren grows louder, piercing shrilly through the rumblings of the storm. The SILHOUETTE becomes more familiar now, as the billowing clouds form themselves into a dark cape. The dots of lightning begin to pulsate as they evolve into two searing yellow eyes.

This then, is the signal of the future presence of the Dark Redeemer of the Night. The Black Wraith. The Avenger of Countless Wrongs...

THE BATMAN

THROUGH TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE CEMETERY NEAR GOTHAM - DAY

A beautiful rolling hill overlooking Gotham City. As CAMERA TRACKS through the trees, tombstones begin to appear. We are in the middle of an immaculate pastoral graveyard. Down below in the distance an endless line of black limousines snakes its way up a winding road.

CAMERA CONTINUES TO TRACK, finally HOLDING ON:

The unfilled graves of Thomas and Martha Wayne. Dark-suited FUNERAL ATTENDANTS wait silently by the caskets.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

A hot sun showers a blazing glow on the throbbing metropolis of Gotham City, choked with cars, buses, PEDESTRIANS, and the attendant pollution. A great American city going through the routine performances of its daily mundane chores.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

CAMERA CLOSE on an oversized pair of striped pants standing in front of a corner newsstand.

VOICE
A copy of the Trib, please.

CLOSE ON GOTHAM TRIBUNE

An edition of the Gotham Tribune is handed over. The headlines scream: DR. & MRS. THOMAS WAYNE GUNNED DOWN IN SENSELESS ROBBERY/KILLING. "Political hopeful was well ahead in latest polls."

An insane giggle rises, O.S. CAMERA PANS UP from the front page to the horrified face of a NEWS VENDOR, staring in disbelief at the person reading the Tribune.

CLOSE ON JOKER - HIS P.O.V.

We see the hideous face of THE JOKER. A revolting perversion of a human being with a chalk-white complexion, ruby red lips, and a startling shock of green hair. He continues to giggle as he reads. A CONFEDERATE stands behind. The Vendor continues to stare as The Joker suddenly notices.

JOKER

Something wrong?

VENDOR

Your...face. It's...

JOKER

Familiar? Maybe we met in Toledo.

VENDOR

I never been to Toledo.

JOKER

Neither have I. Must have been two other guys.

(taking one out)

Have a cigar?

VENDOR

Gee, thanks.

The Vendor takes the cigar, lights it. The Joker and his Confederate move off down the street.

JOKER

Want to hear a good one? What's black and white and dead all over?

CONFEDERATE

A newspaper, Boss, but ain't it black and white and read all over?

Suddenly - there is a tremendous explosion!

ANGLE ON CORNER NEWSSTAND

The corner newsstand has virtually disappeared. Thousands of pages drift down through the air into the debris.

BACK TO JOKER

JOKER

No...

EXT. HILLSIDE CEMETERY - DAY

The procession of limousines has started back down the hill from the funeral. Alfred stands alone by a black Rolls Royce, looks off sadly as:

Young Bruce Wayne gently places a flower on each of his parent's graves, then turns. His eyes are glassed over, but tears do not fall. He crosses to Alfred who puts a protective arm around him.

ALFRED

It's unfair, of course. But sometimes, Master Bruce, one simply has to...accept conditions as they are, and...make the best of them.

BRUCE

(softly)

Why?

ALFRED

Why? Why, because...

(nice smile)

I don't know, really.

BRUCE

(deadly)

Neither do I.

Alfred helps the boy into the car. The Rolls Royce heads back down the hill toward Gotham City.

INT. THORNE CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Telephones RING! Typewriters CLACK! A campaign poster features the face of RUPERT THORNE, an earnest-looking man with a granite-hard face. Underneath is a logo: Rupert Thorne: He'll make our streets safe again."

The headquarters is a beehive of activity. AIDES rush back and forth as a door marked Private bursts open and Thorne appears. He grins with an oily manner.

THORNE

(to AIDE)

Are they all out there?

AIDE

We're waiting for The Evening
Sentinel, Mr. Thorne...

THORNE
Screw The Sentinel. I gotta make
The six o'clock news.
(adjusts his tie)
What's the name of Wayne's kid?

AIDE
Bruce.

Thorne nods, heads for the door, mumbling to himself.

THORNE
Our hearts go out to the Wayne
Family, particularly their young
Son, Bruce...Bruce...Bruce...

EXT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A throng of REPORTERS and TV remote units snap to attention as Thorne appears on the steps of his campaign headquarters. He silences a cacophony of overlapping questions with upraised hands, terminally sincere.

THORNE
I didn't want to win like this. Not
through tragedy. But it's cruelly
ironic...

EXT. GOTHAM - DAY

A more downbeat section of Gotham's business district. CAMERA CLOSES on a specific building: The Monarch Playing Card Company. THORNE'S VOICE CONTINUES OVER:

THORNE'S VOICE
...that a good man like Thomas Wayne
who spoke up so forcefully for the
rights of criminals should himself
become the ultimate victim.

INT. JOKER'S LAIR - DAY

A huge room, garishly decorated in a clown motif. The wallpaper is one contiguous deck of cards. There are harlequin chairs, jesters, and open Jack-In-The-Box, etc.

A MAN sits in a chair at the end of the room, facing away from CAMERA. He watches Thorne on a TV set.

THORNE
(from TV)
But his murderer will be caught and
executed, I promise you! It's time
the scum of our society see that we
mean to have law and order on the
streets of Gotham City!

Suddenly - the set goes mute. The Man in the chair swivels around slowly: It is JOE CHILL!

The Joker stands at the entrance to the room, lowers a remote control box. He grins at Chill. Chill stares back nervously, clearly frightened by The Joker's maniacal presence.

CHILL

I was...headed for the airport.
They said you wanted to see me.
Something...wrong?

JOKER

Wrong? I thought we'd celebrate. I thought you'd like to join me in a drink.

CHILL

(visibly relieved)
Why not...

The Joker leads him to a table, suddenly glowers darkly.

JOKER

You know, I'm disappointed in you, Joe. Very disappointed.

CHILL

(swallowing)

You...are?

JOKER

I said, "Would you like to join me in a drink." Then you're supposed to say, "Sure there'll be room enough for both of us?"

(giggle)

Get it?

(louder giggle)

"Room enough..."

CHILL

Yeah...sure...I get it now...

JOKER

You're a quick study, Joe.

The Joker claps him on the back as they sit at the table. The Confederate enters with two glasses on a tray. One contains a clear liquid. The other - a bilious, thick yellow concoction. The Joker edges it across the table toward Chill who eyes it suspiciously.

JOKER (CONT'D)

Drink up.

Chill examines the yellow liquid, wary.

CHILL
How come...you ain't drinkin' this...

JOKER
Good question. I like lemonade...

He takes it from Chill, hands him the clear liquid. They both down their drinks. The Joker giggles insanely.

CHILL
What's...so funny...?

JOKER
Man walks into a doctor's office,
says, "Are you the doctor's nurse?"
she says, "Yes." He says, "Oh, is
the doctor sick?"

The Joker slams the table in glee, out of control.

CHILL
No offense, Joker, but that's not
very...

Chill stops. The corners of his mouth twitch, then rise involuntarily. He snickers. Again. Starts to giggle. The Joker's eyes narrow. His smile becomes cruel.

JOKER
The doctor says, "I can cure you. The
disease is hereditary." The patient
says, "Then send the bill to my father."

Chill instantly explodes with laughter!

JOKER (CONT'D)
He says, "Help me, Doctor, I've got
amnesia." Doctor says, "How long
have you had it?" He says, "How
long have I had what?"

Chill is on his feet now, convulsed in glee. He sinks to his knees, out of control, then collapses on the floor.

JOKER (CONT'D)
And this one will kill you! I just got
back from a pleasure trip. I drove my
mother-in-law to the airport...

CLOSE ON CHILL

Dead. His mouth frozen in a grotesque grin. The Joker stares down blankly.

JOKER
But seriously, folks...

He looks off, presses the remote control box, activates the sound on the television again.

CLOSE ON TV

Rupert Thorne leans in with an oily look.

THORNE ON TV

In the meantime, our hearts go out to the Wayne family, particularly to their young son, Bruce...

BACK TO JOKER

Watching Thorne. His face twists into a cruel smile.

THORNE

(thoughtful pause)

And I'd like to think that one day Thomas Wayne will look down on this earth and this city and say...

As Thorne and The Joker speak simultaneously.

THORNE & JOKER

"You know what? I was wrong. That Rupert Thorne is one heck of a city councilman."

The Joker explodes in laughter! His terrifying guffaws propel him off the chair onto the floor.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - DAY

A large truck with the logo "GOTHAM GYMNASTICS" starts down the driveway to the gates, moving away from Wayne Manor.

INT. MANOR EXERCISE ROOM - DAY

Alfred and Bruce stand in a newly outfitted exercise room. The equipment has been expertly installed: rings, parallel bars, balancing beam, weight machines, etc. Bruce is in a T-shirt and shorts. He gazes at the impressive array.

ALFRED

One hardly knows where to begin.

BRUCE

Those rings seem simple enough.

Bruce crosses to the rings, leaps, catches hold, tries to hoist himself up. His eyes bulge! He tries again, then drops to the floor in a heap.

ALFRED

Perhaps if we lowered them.

BRUCE
(grim stare)
If you'll excuse me now, Alfred.
I'll see you at dinner.

ALFRED
Yes, Sir.

Alfred leaves, closing the door. Bruce turns, glares up at the rings like deadly enemies. He jumps again, catches hold, starts to hoist himself up, straining with the effort. The veins standing out on his forehead. Slowly, painfully, he begins to inch himself higher and higher.

INT KARATE STUDIO - DAY

Bruce is dressed in a martial arts outfit, tensely faces a thick pine board being held by a Japanese INSTRUCTOR.

INSTRUCTOR
...but you must believe, really
believe you can do it. The mind
is more powerful than the fist, and
the fist is more powerful than the
board. Understood?

Bruce nods earnestly, sets himself. With a blood-curdling SCREAM -- he lashes out! Then - an instantaneous second SCREAM as his fist crumples against the unyielding board.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT'D)
Let's go over it again...

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - SUNRISE

A tree-lined winding road at dawn. Bruce jogs along easily, his right hand encased in a plaster cast. Jogging next to him, huffing and puffing: an exhausted FRENCH PROFESSOR.

BRUCE
I am happy...

FRENCH PROFESSOR
(panting)
Je suis heureux...

BRUCE
Je suis heureux...to make your
acquaintance.

FRENCH PROFESSOR
(gasping)
De...faire votre connaissance...

BRUCE
De faire votre connaissance...

Bruce looks ahead toward a bend in the road. Alfred stands by the Rolls Royce, checking his watch. The spent Professor peels off to the side as Bruce continues on.

BRUCE
Merci, mon Professeur! Tommorow at
Six again, okay?

The Professor manages a feeble wave, collapses by the side of the road in front of Alfred who administers a thermos of hot coffee and a croissant to the stricken man.

ANGLE AROUND OTHER SIDE OF BEND.

Another jogger has joined Bruce around the bend - an older man, his bearded RUSSIAN PROFESSOR.

BRUCE
Dobroye utro, Boris...I am happy...

BORIS
Ochen priyatno...

BRUCE
Ochen priyatno...To make your
acquaintance.

BORIS
Vam...poznakomit...

The two of them jog off into the distance.

BORIS' VOICE
(already winded)
Bozhe moy!...

EXT. WAYNE MANOR LAWN - DAY

Bruce stands facing a large, brightly colored archery target on the lawn of Wayne Manor. From O.S., behind his back, WE HEAR A WHIRRING SOUND.

CLOSE ON ARROW GUN

A gleaming STEEL ARROW "clicks" into the firing slot of an automatic-fire Gatling Gun device. Suddenly - it fires!

BACK TO BRUCE

Wheeling around to face the on-rushing whizzing arrow - lifting a heavily padded hand to catch it in mid-air!

HE MISSES! The arrow "thunks" into his chest, directly over his heart! Bruce sighs, removes the arrow, jerking it out of his hidden protective vest.

BRUCE
Darn...

ANOTHER ARROW whizzes at him! Bruce drops to one knee, this time almost catching it as the steel tip rips away a piece of the heavy padding on his hand.

CLOSE ON ALFRED AT WINDOW

Alfred watches from a window, shaking his head, appalled, now returns to his housekeeping.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - DAY

Bruce is on the rings again. By now using them with considerable expertise, swinging his body in somersaults, then performing the difficult "Iron Cross" maneuver. He pauses at full extension, then swings back, launches himself towards the parallel bars.

Catching the bars expertly, he performs a complicated routine, pausing at the top to look across the room:

A thin balance beam sits below, ten feet away.

Bruce swings back one more time on the upper parallel bar, then flies through the air for the beam! His feet land on top for one split, tenuous second. He teeters - then crashes heavily to the floor. Shaking his head to clear the cobwebs, he stares back at the beam, determined.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - DAY

Alfred exits the rear of Wayne Manor onto the lawn, looks around, mystified.

ALFRED
Master Bruce? Luncheon is served!

Alfred hears a CUMBLING SOUND, looks up as a piece of brick falls, narrowly missing him.

ANGLE ON BRUCE - ALFRED'S P.O.V.

Bruce is scaling the side of the house! A thick rope encircles the chimney of Wayne Manor as Bruce makes his way up the structure, hand over hand. Suddenly: the old brick chimney STARTS TO CRUMBLE! The rope jerks free as bricks fly everywhere and Bruce tumbles heavily down to the lawn at Alfred's feet.

Bruce looks up, grins sheepishly. Alfred glances back up at the demolished chimney, then back down at Bruce again.

ALFRED
Santa will be heartbroken.

INT. KARATE STUDIO - DAY

A TERRIFYING SCREAM! A PINE BOARD is smashed to smithereens by a lightning-quick fist!

Bruce wheels to FACE CAMERA. HE IS NOW SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD. Cool, clear eyes flick in the opposite direction as:

Two STUDENTS charge him! He flips one over his head, flips the other while simultaneously spinning around to face the Instructor who closes ranks from behind.

The fight is furiously expert - hands and feet working like windmills. Bruce is parrying every thrust the Instructor has to offer, countering every move, but is nonetheless being backed into a corner.

The Instructor moves in for the kill as Bruce suddenly vaults up and over him in a seven-foot backflip! Grabbing the man's black belt from behind for leverage, he hoists the Instructor over his head, then sends the bewildered man flying through the air, crashing onto the mat in a heap.

Bruce looks over, suddenly concerned. He holds the Instructor's black belt in his hands. The Instructor is half-dazed, in some pain. His eyes suddenly pop open - he grins broadly back at Bruce.

INSTRUCTOR
That's okay. Keep it.

INT. BALLET STUDIO - DAY

A line of beautiful young would-be BALLERINAS perform the various positions at the bar in a dance studio to the musical strains of Swan Lake. A stern INSTRUCTRESS supervises, barking out the numbers.

CAMERA TRACKS past the female figures at the bar. In the middle of the line, dressed in tights and a T-shirt - Bruce Wayne. Perspiring heavily, he performs the set routine with amazing grace. A gorgeous DANCER looks over her shoulder at him, whispers under her breath.

GIRL DANCER
Any of the guys ever make fun of
you?

BRUCE
(nice smile)
One guy. Once.

INT. BROKERAGE FIRM - DAY

A stock ticker jumps to life. CAMERA PANS the oak-panelled walls of a room, PAST portrait paintings of sever-looking BROKERS in three-piece suits.

BROKER'S VOICE
...the sizeable trust fund left you

by your father, the late Dr. Thomas Wayne. Now we admit that young Bruce here has made a few lucky guesses in the past..

CAMERA HOLDS on a board room conference table: two impeccably turned-out BROKERS face Alfred and Bruce.

BROKER (CONT'D)

...but the time has come for us to insist on control. We appeal to you, Mr. Pennyworth, as the executor of this estate.

ALFRED

It was Dr. Wayne's intention for his son to achieve self-reliance at the earliest possible age. With that in mind, I suggest you accept the lad's "lucky guesses" as instructions.

BRUCE

Let's hold on to our oil stocks for now. I see a chance of gasoline prices rising to sixty, even seventy cents a gallon.

BROKER

(tolerant smile)

Why not a dollar?

BRUCE

And I'd like to transfer our mutual funds into the development of the computer chip. I've been experimenting with them, and...

BROKER

Computer...

BRUCE

Chip.

BROKER #2

Sounds like an after-school snack for machines. Anything else?

BRUCE

As a matter of fact, there is. Yesterday, I had this most delicious hamburger at this new little place called MacDonald's...

The two Brokers exchange a totally exasperated look.

EXT. MONUMENT VALLEY - DAY

CAMERA PANS a campsite with pup tents and a burnt-out campfire to a van featuring the logo: Gotham High School Mountaineering Club.

ANGLE ON ROCK NEEDLE

A towering needle-like rock shoots up from the desert floor. CAMERA PUSHES IN: we see the outlines of THREE CLIMBERS connected by a rope, halfway up the jagged face.

CLOSE ON CLIMBERS

The wind howls. The FIRST CLIMBER drives a piton into the rock face, attaches his line, looks down.

TWO CLIMBERS below struggle mightily. The drop to the desert floor beneath is dizzying. Climber #2 looks up.

CLIMBER #2
Don't look down, for Chrissake!

CLIMBER #1
I'm trying to see if I can spot
Bruce...

CLIMBER #2
Will you forget about him? He
wandered off, that's all - in one of
his famous moods.

CLIMBER #1
(drives in piton)
Who knows? Maybe the great Bruce
Wayne finally found something he's
too scared to tackle...

ANGLE ON ROCK NEEDLE - HELICOPTER SHOT

HELICOPTER ZOOMS UP and around to the far side of the needle - one lone figure struggles up the absolutely sheer opposite face of the cliff, a few feet from the top.

CLOSE ON BRUCE

His jaw set - eyes clear. The bitter wind whips through his hair. He drives in his final piton, hoists himself up onto the tiny circular crest of the needle.

HELICOPTER CAMERA RISES. The majestic valley spreads out below us. In the center - the lonely figure of Bruce Wayne - self-reliance and victory personified.

INT. WAYNE MANOR LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It is late. Alfred relaxes in an easy chair, reading an edition of the Gotham Tribune.

The headline screams: JOKER STEALS KALAHARI DIAMOND - Master of Mirth Strikes Again.

Alfred puts down the paper, stifling a yawn. He hears A MUTED VOICE from upstairs, rises curiously.

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bruce is spread-eagled on the bed, fully clothed - fast asleep. A VOICE drones from a bedside tape recorder.

TAPE VOICE

An atom with a magnetic dipole exposed to a nonuniform magnetic field undergoes a linear force in addition to its tendency toward orientation...

Alfred stops in the doorway with a sympathetic look.

TAPE VOICE (CONT'D)

The use of an atomic beam makes possible an observation of an induced transition...

Alfred switches off the tape, adjusts a quilted coverlet over Bruce with a paternal smile.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - DAY

CAMERA PANS past the balancing beam, parallel bars, and exercise rings to Bruce, who faces them confidently, but this time with a big difference - HE IS BLINDFOLDED. He takes a tentative step forward, gauging his distance, then leaps up into the air - grabbing the rings with perfect accuracy! He performs a series of difficult routines with clockwork precision, then swings through the air to the parallel bars, latching on to the lower one, then propelling himself up to the higher one. His gyrations become faster, gaining speed and momentum. Suddenly - he launches himself toward the balance beam!

Bruce lands on the end of the beam like a cat - keeping his balance, having calculated the exact distance to the inch. He steps forward with total security, travels the length of the beam with the ease of a pedestrian. Reaching the end, he does a complete forward somersault, lands solidly on his feet. Bruce removes his blindfold, stares back at the path he's just taken, amazed by himself.

ALFRED'S VOICE
Incredible!

Bruce turns. A proud Alfred beams from the doorway.

ALFRED
Why, you were blind as a bat, Sir.

CAMERA PUSHES IN on Bruce's grinning face as WE HEAR:

PRINCIPAL'S VOICE
...many talented, successful graduates of Gotham High, but none like this young man. Holder of the highest scholastic average in the history of the school...

EXT. GOTHAM HIGH SCHOOL GROUNDS - DAY

CAMERA PANS the front lawn of Gotham High School. It is Graduation Day. STUDENTS and proud PARENTS sit in chairs facing a rostrum, from where the PRINCIPAL speaks:

PRINCIPAL
...eight athletic letters and
Captain of five teams, your Class
Valedictorian - Bruce Wayne!

Applause. Bruce rises in his cap and gown, makes his way to the rostrum. A confident presence glows behind his clear eyes. A self-assuredness without ego. A natural grace which exudes the maturity of a man twice his age. CAMERA PANS TO the figure of Alfred, who beams with pride.

BRUCE
Thank you, Principal Peters. Fellow students, welcome parents, honored faculty and guests...

EXT. BACK OF SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

Bruce hurries down the steps in his black cap and gown, diploma in hand. A pretty COED (CINDY) passes.

CINDY
Great speech, Bruce. I sure hope you're coming to Deedee's tonight...

BRUCE
Thanks, Cindy, but I don't think I can make it. Marshall McLuhan is giving a talk at the University.

CINDY
Bruce...

He turns. Cindy looks at him shyly, then moves closer.

CINDY (CONT'D)
I...hope you don't mind me saying this, Bruce, but...well, I guess all the girls feel the same way...

BRUCE
Feel...?

CINDY
It's just that everybody thinks
you're great...great looking and
everything...but you never seem to
have time for any...fun.

BRUCE
Fun? What...kind of fun?

Cindy stares into his eyes with a mixture of hunger and innocence. She leans in, kisses him softly and deeply on the mouth. Bruce's eyes bulge with surprise, then slowly flutter shut. They finally break.

CINDY
(passionate whisper)
275...7634...

Bruce smiles, slides by, heads down the steps. Cindy watches wistfully.

EXT. GOTHAM STREETS - DAY

The Rolls Royce makes its way through the crowded streets.

INT. ROLLS ROYCE - DAY

Bruce stares out the window. Alfred drives on, takes a small notebook from his pocket, reads.

ALFRED
You have your guitar lesson at four,
following which, you wanted time to
finish your article for The Scientific American. Tonight, Marshall
McLuhan lectures at...

Alfred stops. Bruce is lost in another world.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
Are you all right, Sir?

BRUCE
Hmm?

Bruce turns from the window. Alfred notices something.

ALFRED
Is that blood on your lip?

Bruce frowns curiously. He wipes his lip with his finger, then licks it thoughtfully.

BRUCE
Lipstick.

ALFRED
(shocked)
Lipstick?

BRUCE
Lipstick.

Alfred smiles uncomfortably. The Rolls stops at a light. Bruce notices something out the window.

ANGLE OF SHOWROOM - HIS P.O.V.

An elegant foreign car showroom. In the window, its front grill grinning back at Bruce - a BRIGHT RED FERRARI.

BACK TO ROLLS ROYCE.

BRUCE
(muttering)
275-7634...

ALFRED
Beg pardon?

BRUCE
Do you know what's wrong with me,
Alfred?

ALFRED
I can't imagine a thing, Sir.

BRUCE
I never have time for any fun.

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

The first orange rays of the sun stab upwards through the clouds in a brilliant sunrise. The bright red Ferrari is parked in the sand on the top of a high dune. The VOICES of BRUCE and CINDY drift up from below.

BRUCE'S VOICE
(sleepy; affectionate)
Good morning...

CINDY'S VOICE
Mmm...

BRUCE'S VOICE
Want to go for a swim?

CINDY'S VOICE
(pleased)
I don't think I can walk...
(soft purr)
Where'd you learn to do all that?

BRUCE'S VOICE
Here. Last night. It's strange,
but once I get the hang of something
I just can't seem to stop.
(beat)
Sorry.

CINDY'S VOICE
(dreamy)
Oh...that's okay...

CAMERA PUSHES IN on Ferrari as the ROAR of a powerful racing engine is heard, gather in intensity.

EXT. GOTHAM RACETRACK - DAY

A gleaming red Formula One racing car ROARS ACROSS THE FINISH LINE to the waving of a black-checkered flag and the WILD CHEERS of the CROWD.

ANGLE ON WINNER'S CIRCLE

WE SEE THE ADULT BRUCE WAYNE sitting in his racing machine, holding up a trophy under a banner: WINNER - GOTHAM 500.

Flashbulbs pop! FANS cheer! A BUXOM MISS GOTHAM leans in to pose for pictures with Bruce and share champagne from the trophy cup. A disgruntled MARIO ANDRETTI elbows his way through the throng to shake hands with the winner.

MARIO ANDRETTI
Hell of a race, Bruce.

BRUCE
Thanks, Mario.

ANDRETTI
Remember how you told me this was
just a hobby? Well keep it that way
and let the rest of us make a
living, okay?

Miss Gotham leans in, hugs Bruce tightly, giggles, then whispers something in his ear. Bruce looks up.

BRUCE
(at Miss Gotham)
That's your hobby?
(grins)
No kidding.

INSERT SHOT - GOTHAM TRIBUNE

The Gotham Tribune cartwheels INTO FRAME: The headline reads:
PRESIDENT DECLARED - I AM NOT A CROOK!

Farther down the page is a smaller headline, reading: BRUCE WAYNE
DECLARIES - I AM NOT THE FATHER! Millionaire playboy cleared in Miss

Gotham paternity suit.

EXT. GOTHAM COURTHOUSE - DAY

A throng a REPORTERS waits with a predominantly FEMALE CROWD at the entrance to Gotham Courthouse.

Bruce suddenly appears in the Courthouse doorway as a LOUD CHEER rises from the Female Crowd. He elbows his way through them, Alfred at his side. FLASHBULBS POP! The Women scream and reach out at him, trying to tear off a souvenir. REPORTERS yell overlapping questions.

BRUCE

Sorry, no comment. Sorry...

ALFRED

(at hysterical Woman)

Madame, do try to compose yourself...

They reach the sidewalk and the car. Alfred heads for the front door as Bruce jostles his way inside the back.

INT. ROLLS - DAY

Bruce slams the door shut behind him, turns, stops, stares: Already sitting in the back seat is a beautiful FEMALE REPORTER, legs crossed, perfectly composed, with a portable tape recorder settled on her lap.

REPORTER

Ann Daniel. Gotham Tribune.

BRUCE

(reaching for door handle)

Bruce Wayne. Nice to have met you.

He tries the door - there's another scream from the Female Crowd who press around the car anticipating his exit. Two ANGRY FEMINISTS raise protesting placards threateningly as Bruce slams the door shut again.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

(at Alfred)

Go.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Rolls lurches its way out of the Crowd into traffic.

INT. ROLLS - DAY

Bruce stares ahead in silence. ANN studies him with a wry smile, then pushes the "record" button on her machine.

BRUCE

Are you going to play some music?

ANN

You know what they say about Bruce

Wayne?

(no response)

That he's idle and jaded, with no
ambition left - because there's
nothing he hasn't done and been the
best at.

BRUCE

Sounds like a pretty boring guy.

ANN

What haven't you done, Mr. Wayne?

Cured cancer? Climbed Everest?

(no response)

You climbed Everest?

Bruce smiles, reaches out, punches off the recorder.

ANN (CONT'D)

That's...not much of an exclusive.

BRUCE

What did you have in mind?

ANN

Something slightly more...in depth.

BRUCE

Sort of like - "A Day in the Life
of Bruce Wayne?"

ANN

Exactly. You just go ahead and do
whatever you'd be doing naturally -
only make me a part of it.

BRUCE

Miss Daniel - I'll do my level best
to accommodate you.

INT. ANN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CAMERA CLOSE on Ann's sleeping face as she lies naked in bed, her
features locked in a dreamy smile. She sighs contentedly as HER OWN
VOICE IS HEARD from across the room.

ANN'S VOICE

...because there's nothing he hasn't
done and been the best at...

Bruce stands at the bedroom window, staring down absent-mindedly into
the street as he finishes dressing. A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER rolls
across the city.

BRUCE'S VOICE

(from tape)

Sounds like a pretty boring guy.

Bruce punches off the recorder, then presses "rewind." He looks over at Ann's sleeping body, then down at the recorder again. He stops it, then presses "play."

ANN'S VOICE
(from tape)
...he's idle and jaded with no
ambition left...

Bruce smiles to himself bitterly, exits silently.

EXT. APARTMENT STREET - NIGHT

Bruce crosses the street to a gleaming Aston-Martin sportscar. ANOTHER THUNDER CLAP! Rain falls as he reaches into the car, takes out a topcoat and hat. He starts to pull the convertible top up, glances down the street:

PEOPLE scurry to avoid the rain. Down the block, across the street, a COUPLE with a YOUNG DAUGHTER look over nervously as a tough-looking BIKER on a huge Harley-Davidson rolls up parallel to them on the street.

BACK TO BRUCE

Adjusting the convertible top. Looking off again.

BACK TO BRUCE'S P.O.V.

Suddenly: the Biker hops the curb in front of the Family! Pulling a gun, he herds them back into a dark alleyway.

BACK TO BRUCE

Eyes narrowing. His jaw twitches. A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT! Bruce explodes across the street for the alleyway.

As Bruce arrives: the Young Girl bursts out screaming, runs past him. Bruce hesitates, then runs inside the alley.

ANGLE IN ALLEYWAY

The Man lies in the alley, being cradled by the Woman. Blood oozes from the side of his head Bruce arrives.

WOMAN
I...think he'll be all right. Our daughter's run to call an ambulance.

Bruce hears the REVVING of a motorcycle. He looks off down the alley, eyes flashing with anger.

ANGLE DOWN ALLEY - HIS P.O.V.

The Biker grins at him from the far end of the alley, puts his Harley in gear, rolls off through the pouring rain.

BACK TO BRUCE

He makes his decision, takes off in pursuit.

WOMAN
Careful! He's got a gun!

EXT. END OF ALLEYWAY

Bruce arrives at the alley corner, looks off:

ANGLE ON BIKER - HIS P.O.V.

The Biker hovers by the side of an apartment building, still grinning at Bruce through the rain. He rolls forward slowly, almost as if enticing Bruce to follow him, now disappears again.

BACK TO BRUCE

Bruce arrives at the rear of the building, which faces on a vacant dirt lot. He edges forward through the mud, turning the corner, suddenly coming face to face with:

The Biker. Still grinning. Switching off his Harley. Muscles bulging through his wet T-shirt as he dismounts.

BIKER
Congratulations, man.
(wide smile)
You caught me. Matter of fact...

The ROAR OF ENGINES is HEARD! Bruce turns to see: TWO MORE BIKERS, rolling into position behind him. Bruce is hopelessly trapped.

BIKER (CONT'D)
...you caught all of us...

The other two Bikers now dismount and close in. The first Biker draws his gun. Biker #2 looks Bruce up and down critically, squinting at him through the rain.

BIKER #2
That's my raincoat you're wearing.
Take it off.

Biker #2 snaps his arm forward - a switchblade appears in his hand. He flicks it at Bruce who stands his ground, slicing a button off the front of his raincoat.

BIKER #2 (CONT'D)
Pick up the button, Wimpy. Then
lick it clean and hand me my coat.

Bruce stares icily, then slowly bends down to retrieve the button from the mud. Suddenly: Biker #1's foot flashes INTO FRAME, headed straight at Bruce's face! In a lightning-quick move, Bruce grabs the

swinging leg with both hands, rises, swings Biker #1 off the ground in a circle, sends him crashing into the motorcycles as his gun goes flying.

Biker #2, switchblade in hand, rushes Bruce. Biker #3 unhooks chains from his belt. Bruce sidesteps: the knife slashes through his raincoat, sending it billowing out behind him like a cape! Biker #3 whistles the chains past Bruce's ear: He snatches them, karate-kicks Biker #3 in the stomach, simultaneously belting Biker #2 across the side of the head with the chains, knocking him unconscious.

Biker #3 lunges at Bruce from behind! Bruce spins, grabbing his arm, twisting the knife away, catching it in his other hand as he trips Biker #3, sends him sprawling in the mud. Bruce now straddles him, knife in hand.

CLOSE ON BIKER #3

Blinking in fear, his head pressed into the mud next to the button.

BRUCE
Your turn to pick up the button,
scumbag...

Biker #3's arm slowly starts forward as Bruce steps on it.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
With your mouth.

Biker #3 shuts his eyes in humiliation as: THE SOUND OF A SIREN IS HEARD!

ANGLE ON SIDE OF BUILDING

TWO POLICEMEN round the corner of the apartment building, now stop, stare in astonished silence at:

The Three Bikers, sprawled in the mud near their machines. Bruce has completely disappeared.

EXT. ALLEYWAY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A paramedic van is parked at the entrance. Umbrella-holding ONLOOKERS watch. A gurney with the wounded Man is wheeled out. The Woman and the Young Girl follow.

Bruce appears at the edge of the crowd, collar still up, hat adjusted low over his face. He stares.

The Paramedics stop. One leans down, examines the Man, then covers his face with the sheet. The Woman turns away in silence. The Young Girl clings to her.

Bruce watches, his eyes filled with tears. He turns, walks off as CAMERA RACKS FOCUS to the pouring rain.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

CAMERA RACKS BACK from the rain to Bruce, standing by the Aston-Martin in front of Wayne Manor.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bruce enters the empty living room. His expression is numb. He pauses, lost in thought. Then, moving as if by instinct, he heads for the stairs leading to the basement.

INT. BASEMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Bruce descends the stairs, walks down the hallway to a door. He stops, looks down at the heavy padlock which seals it shut. His eyes close in pain, remembering an earlier time.

INT. YOUNG BRUCE'S LAB - NIGHT

Seen through dim half-light: his childhood lab is coated with dust - a room obviously left unused for years. We hear A KEY TURNING IN THE LOCK. The door to the lab swings open. Bruce trains a flashlight on the interior of the musty room. He enters, finds a light switch, flips it on.

The lab table is much as we remember it, crammed with old test tubes, beakers, etc. Bruce crosses, stares down, lost in his past, then switches on the holograph machine. He stares - stunned and amazed as:

THE HOLOGRAPH FIGURE OF TEN-YEAR-OLD BRUCE WAYNE SPRINGS TO LIFE! An exact visual reproduction of the Child who used to be. The Young Boy peers down through a cobwebbed microscope in precisely the position we first saw him.

Bruce's eyes fill with tears - he shuts them tightly as he hears a VOICE from long ago.

YOUNG BRUCE'S VOICE
It's called a holograph, Dad.
Pretty neat, huh?

One laser beam suddenly shorts out with age: the image of Young Bruce disappears. The second beam continues to burn, its energy directed at a disintegrating basement wall.

Bruce slumps at the other side of the table, oblivious, his face buried in his hands.

OVERLAPPING IMAGES AND VOICE START TO APPEAR ON THE SCREEN.

Martha Wayne - giggling with Young Bruce, then kissing her husband passionately.

DR. WAYNE'S VOICE
This - is definitely not a guy.

Thomas Wayne - his face twisted in anguish

as Chill's bullet blows.

MARTHA'S VOICE
Oh, my God! No!!

A SHARP CRACK! - As a piece of something crumbles away.

ANGLE ON BRUCE

Looking up. Staring across the room:

The remaining laser beam has eaten away a piece of the basement wall - there is a dull ECHOING THUD as the plaster hits the bottom of some unseen cavernous space below.

BACK TO BRUCE

Rising. Crossing curiously to the hole in the wall. Training his flashlight torch through it.

ANGLE DOWN HOLE - HIS P.O.V.

AN IMMENSE CAVERN trails down and away into the blackness. A network of aged timbers intersect themselves, shoring up the side of the foundation.

BACK TO BRUCE

Staring. Playing his flashlight against the visible parts of the underground cavity. He picks up a beaker from the lab table, then lets it fall through the hole. There is an interminable wait. Finally - the impact of SHATTERING GLASS.

ANGLE BACK THROUGH HOLE

Seen from inside: the torch beam shines. Suddenly - a long length of rope is tossed through. Bruce appears in the opening. He wriggles through, hanging on to the rope.

Bruce expertly shimmies down the rope, a man completely at home in an action he knows well. The beam from the torch dances across the walls of the cavern: high-ribbed, jagged walls, suggesting some sort of labyrinth beyond. The rope has played out. Bruce hangs by the end, looks down, lets himself fall to the cavern floor below.

He rises, plays the torch against the sides of the cave.

ANGLE ON BEAM - HIS P.O.V.

The beam searches into crannies, exploring dark gray walls. It comes across a large patch of solid black.

BACK TO BRUCE

Looking curiously.

BACK TO BLACK PATCH

As the beam hits the black patch fully - dozens of yellow eyes appear. The entire mass LAUNCHES ITSELF INTO CAMERA with a terrifying screech and the sound of beating wings.

BACK TO BRUCE

His jaw drops, stunned, as THE COLONY OF BATS swarm over him! He stumbles, protecting his face. The torch drops to the floor. Its shaft of light dances crazily around the cavern.

From O.S. - a low moan is heard from Bruce. It rises, gathers in volume and intensity, gradually becoming a deep, booming guttural roar - at once a scream of total pain and a cry of defiance. The terrified bats scream back in a maze of hot and cold light bouncing off beating black wings.

INT. ALFRED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The wind and rain batter against Alfred's partially open bedroom window. Mixed with the sounds - a strong echo of the roar from the cavern. Alfred's eyes pop open. He rises groggily, makes his way to the window, closes it. CAMERA HOLDS on window, PANS UP to the moon.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - CLOSE ON MOON - NIGHT

A FLASHING LIGHTNING BOLT: CAMERA PANS DOWN from the moon through the raging storm to the graves of Thomas and Martha Wayne in the country cemetery, high on the hill.

Kneeling between them is Bruce - fists clenched, head bowed, tiny rivulets of water running off his face and body - totally lost in silent prayer.

BRUCE'S VOICE

I've worked hard to make you proud of me. To become the kind of person whose presence could make a difference in the world. But one man can only do only so much, Father. Mother, tonight I saw the sign I thought would never come. Now - for the first time I realize I must...be...more...than a man.

A FLASHING LIGHTNING BOLT WIPES THE SCREEN!

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

EXT. GOTHAM SKY - NIGHT

The remaining gossamer wisp of a transparent cloud pulls away from a glowing FULL MOON over Gotham City.

INT. GOTHAM SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

An express train roars through a seedy subway station.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - NIGHT

A well-scrubbed TEENAGE COUPLE sit together holding hands. The BOY is dressed in a dinner jacket, the GIRL is a chiffon party dress with a prominent orchid corsage pinned to it. They exchange a nervous glance, looking across the car at:

A TOUGH-LOOKING THUG who sits opposite them, his muscular arms bulging through a torn windbreaker. He grins across at the nervous Teenagers menacingly, exposing yellow teeth, then sneaks a sideways look at: A THICKLY-BUILT TRUCKDRIVER-TYPE who stares straight ahead.

These are the only four people in the car.

The subway slows for the next stop. The Truckdriver-Type rises disinterestedly, crosses the car, looks down at the Teenagers who are none too happy with his departure.

TRUCKDRIVER-TYPE

Have a nice time at the prom, kids?

BOY

Yes, thank you, Sir.

The subway doors hiss open. The Truckdriver-Type smiles and exits. The Teenagers looks across the car worried.

The car pulls out of the station. The Thug rises, crosses the car, grabs hold of a vertical pole to steady himself, smirks down at the Teenagers.

THUG

You smell good enough to eat, Sweetheart.

BOY

(nervous bravado)

If you've got something to say,
Mister, talk to me, okay?

THUG

I was talking to you - Sweetheart.

A knife drops out of the Thug's sleeve into his hand, its razor-sharp blade glinting in the light. The Teenagers freeze with terror.

THUG (CONT'D)

Maybe it's that flower that smells
so good.

The Thug plucks the corsage off the trembling Girl's bodice, holds it up to his nose, inhales deeply, shaking his head.

THUG (CONT'D)
Nope. Still can't place it.

VOICE
Funny. I can smell you from way over here.

The Thug wheels, stares off at the end of the car, his jaw dropping open. The Teenagers' eyes bulge in disbelief.

CLOSE ON CHEST

A golden circle with the black figure of a bat sits in the middle of a steel-gray skin-tight fabric stretched across a massively muscled chest.

VOICE
Give the lady back her flower.

BACK TO SCENE

The Thug looks his unseen adversary up and down cautiously, unsure of whether to laugh or obey.

THUG
Okay...sure. Just wanted to have a little fun. I...

With a sudden lightning move he flips the switchblade in his hand, sending it whizzing in the direction of the Voice.

CLOSE ON KNIFE

The knife whistles through the air TOWARD CAMERA. Suddenly a black-gloved hand miraculously snatches it out of mid-air, spinning it, then sends it flying back! The switchblade pierces the corsage, jerking it out of the Thug's hand, sticking it into the wall where it quivers behind him. The Thug freezes, turning white.

VOICE
Now then. I think you said you wanted to have a little fun.

EXT. GOTHAM SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

The express wheezes to a stop at the next station. A MIDDLE-AGED COUPLE waits for the doors to open, then enter the car. They suddenly stop, staring in amazement:

The Thug stands spread-eagled in the middle of the car, both wrists cuffed to overhanging metal handholds. The center vertical pole disappears up one pants leg, finally reappearing out of the collar of his shirt.

The teenage Boy passes the amazed Couple, confidently dusting his hands. He reaches back for the Girl who sniffs her corsage, then

follows him out of the car.

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Gotham Police Headquarters. CAMERA TRACKS PAST cubicles and offices, CLACKING, RINGING, DETECTIVES interrogating SUSPECTS, etc., catching up with DAVID GORDON, the Commissioner of Police, a gruff-looking man in his middle fifties who pauses to light a cheap cigarette.

Heading toward him from the other direction: SERGEANT HALEY, a smooth-faced kissass in his thirties.

GORDON
What's up Haley?

HALEY
Pretty slow, Commissioner. Half a dozen muggings, some kids on PCP, and...oh, yeah. Looks like we got a transvestite prowling the southside subway system.

GORDON
Full moon tonight. Pervo heaven.

Gordon walks through his office door, Haley following.

INT. GORDON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The extremely cluttered office of an immensely overworked civil servant.

HALEY
From his description, this guy could make it as a float in the Rose Parade. Big black cape, black boots, black hood over his head...

A squawk box intercom crackles on Gordon's desk.

INTERCOM VOICE
Hostage situation, Commissioner.
Man holding two women near 3rd and Grand. SWAT's on the way.

HALEY
...and get this - a big yellow moon on his chest with a cockamamy bat in the middle.

GORDON
(into intercom)
Get my car. I'm going down there.

HALEY
Funny thing is, the guy takes on this big goon with a knife...

GORDON
(chomping cigar)
You come along too, Haley. I may need
to swap someone for those women.

EXT. DOWNTOWN ALLEY & STREET - NIGHT

Police cars barricade a major avenue, their spotlights trained on a dead-end alley. A SWAT LIEUTENANT speaks through a mike.

SWAT LT.
Come on out of there, Wells! Come
out of we're coming in after you!

WELLS' VOICE
I got hostages! You get one minute
to clear out or I blow'em away!

From behind: Commissioner Gordon's car screeches to a stop. Gordon piles out, followed by Haley.

GORDON
How bad is it, Lieutenant?

SWAT LT.
We're screwed, Sir. That's a dead-end
alley in there. No way to get
behind him.

EXT. DEAD-END ALLEY

A pockmarked thug (WELLS) holds one YOUNG WOMAN roughly, trains his gun on ANOTHER. He squints out into the light.

WELLS
Thirty seconds, Pig! Then I spill
one lady's brains on the street!
Twenty-five...

CAMERA PANS DOWN to the pavement behind Wells.

WELLS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Twenty!...

A manhole cover rises, moves aside silently.

WELLS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Fifteen!...

BACK TO WELLS

WELLS (CONT'D)
Ten!...

WOMAN
No! Please!

Wells cocks the gun, sticks it at her head.

WELLS
Five! Four!...

VOICE
Three...two...one...

Wells spins in astonishment:

An ominous hulking shadow looms in the darkness behind him. TWO PULSATING YELLOW EYES pierce through the blackness.

VOICE
I just counted you out, Wells.

Wells fires! The Shadow swings the manhole cover up as the bullet ricochets off it harmlessly. Wells prepares to fire again. The manhole cover suddenly explodes out of the darkness! One swing of a massively muscled arm - one sickening "clang" - and it's over.

ANGLE ON STREET

SWAT LT.
Let's go!

The Police rush toward the alley, Gordon and Haley bringing up the rear, as the two Women emerge.

WOMAN
WOMAN #2
He saved us! A giant black
feet tall!
monster from the
sewers!

The Police storm into the alley as Gordon and Haley comfort the panting Women.

WOMAN
He had black wings...

WOMAN #3
And...and yellow eyes...

GORDON
Well, of course he did...You can
both calm down now, ladies. The
nightmare's over...

WOMAN
Huge arms...thick black gloves...

HALEY
(suddenly)
With a bright yellow moon on his

chest?

WOMAN #2
That's right...

HALEY
And a black bat flying right in the
middle of it!

WOMAN
That's right!

The Women are led away by Paramedics. Haley cocks his head questioningly at Gordon as they proceed into the alley.

GORDON
Forget it. That airhead from the
subway could never have made it to
the north side of town this fast.

HALEY
Maybe there's more than one of them.
Maybe we're dealing with some sort
of secret society of cross-dressers.

Wells is led past them, still groggy, as they arrive at the open manhole and peer down into the forbidding blackness.

GORDON
Get after him, Haley.

HALEY
(gulping)
Me, Sir?

GORDON
Well, you're the only one with an
accurate description!

Haley reluctantly lowers himself into the open manhole as Gordon turns, yells down the alleyway.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Comb the area! I want every squad
car available! We're looking for
the mother of all psychos in a party
costume!

Gordon turns back, looks down into the empty manhole where Haley has now disappeared.

HALEY'S VOICE
(from manhole)
You don't think he...bites, do you,
Sir?

EXT. GOTHAM APARTMENT HOUSE - HIGH SHOT - NIGHT

CAMERA LOOKS DOWN from the roof of a Gotham skyscraper at the windows of a forty-story apartment house below.

CAMERA HOLDS on a pair of glass doors leading out to a rosetta-carved stone balcony. Clearly visible through the doors: AN ELDERLY COUPLE lie face down on the floor of their living room, guarded by a masked BURGLAR holding a shotgun. ANOTHER BURGLAR has managed to open a wall safe and begins stuffing valuables into a gunny sack.

CAMERA ZOOMS BACK!

We are some thirty stories higher across a wide avenue.

A black-gloved hand ENTERS FRAME, holding a thin, clear nylon cord with a tiny barbed fishhook on the end.

The other gloved hand steadies a gleaming titanium rifle barrel with an infrared scope. The fishhook is threaded through the chamber.

A flap is opened in a thick, compartmentalized black belt. The moonlight glints off a cylindrical silver gas cartridge.

ANGLE ACROSS STREET THROUGH SCOPE

Seen through the magnified infrared scope: the cross hairs of the rifle sight settle in on the head of the Burglar holding the shotgun.

The cross hairs pause - then suddenly lower to the balcony. The rifle FIRES with an audible "hiss" of compressed gas.

ANGLE ON ROSETTA BALCONY

As the fishhook whistles through a hole in the rosetta stone framework of the balcony. On impact with the floor it pops open - expanding to ten times its size, having now become an effective grappling hook.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Burglar with the shotgun turns at the muffled metallic NOISE, looks through the glass doors at the empty balcony.

EXT. BALCONY FLOOR

The grappling hook inches across the balcony floor, catching a firm hold against the stone.

EXT. SKYSCRAPER ROOF - NIGHT

The nylon cord has been pulled taut - it disappears down into the blackness at a dizzying height, some four hundred feet above the avenue and crisscrossing traffic lights below.

Black-gloved hands take hold of the cord, testing it.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

An ominous BLACK SHADOW, cape billowing out behind in an eerie silhouette, passes in front of the glowing yellow ball of the full moon.

ANGLE DOWN CORD AT BALCONY

The balcony and double glass doors WHISTLE UP AT CAMERA at a dizzying speed, growing larger by the millisecond!

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Burglar has finished his work at the safe. He nods to the other Burglar who grins, then cocks his shotgun, pointing it down at the helpless Couple on the floor.

The flicker of an outside SHADOW flits across the room - the Burglar blinks, wheels with his shotgun!

Suddenly: the double doors explode with a hail of shattering glass! Almost simultaneously - the shotgun FIRES!

INT. GORDON'S CAR - NIGHT

A surly Gordon looks over as his intercom crackles.

INTERCOM VOICE

Commissioner, this is Sergeant Havemeyer. I'm on the fortieth floor of the Gotham Arms. Our boy has struck again. Cape, boots, hood -- the whole drill.

GORDON

(snatches intercom)

When?

HAVEMEYER'S VOICE

Just now. The owners tripped a silent alarm. We responded and heard a gunshot as we were running down the hallway. The victims are fine. Sonofabitch cold-cocked both perpetrators.

GORDON

Atta boy, Havemeyer. Hold him for questioning till I get there.

HAVEMEYER'S VOICE

Can't do that, Sir. He's...already left.

GORDON

But you were right outside the door...

HAVEMEYER'S VOICE
He left...by the window, Sir.

GORDON
By the window? Goddamnit, Man,
you're on the fortieth floor!

HAVEMEYER'S VOICE
That's...affirmative, Sir.

GORDON
You get back to headquarters pronto,
Mister! I want your urine checked
for drugs!

HAVEMEYER'S VOICE
Yes, Sir.

Gordon slams down the intercom in disgust.

GORDON
Maybe it's something in the water.
Maybe the whole city's on drugs.

EXT. GOTHAM STREETS - NIGHT

Police SIRENS everywhere. A squad car rolls slowly down the street,
its spotlight searching the doorways and alleys.

INT. SQUAD CAR - NIGHT

The COP DRIVER yawns, turns to his PARTNER who works the spotlight, now
notices something.

COP DRIVER
What's that?

PARTNER
Wino...
(out the window)
Go back to sleep, Ace!

Suddenly: A WHISTLING SOUND through the air! The two Cops blink, snap
their heads forward as the searchlight is trained on:

ANGLE ON BATMAN - THEIR P.O.V.

THE BATMAN! - Seen in his majestic totality for the very first time. A
truly awesome figure from his black cowl to his gleaming black boots.
His huge, dark cape billows out ominously behind him.

BACK TO SQUAD CAR

COP DRIVER
Holee shit...

PARTNER
Let's get him!

BACK TO SCENE

The squad car lurches forward! Batman whirls, runs down an alley. The squad car swings, pulls in after him.

INT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Batman runs with the speed of an Olympic sprinter, but the squad car gains rapidly. He looks over his shoulder.

ANGLE ON SQUAD CAR - HIS P.O.V.

The squad car fills the alleyway.

BACK TO BATMAN

He looks in front of him in horror - another squad car speed at him from the other direction. It too fills the alleyway. There's no place to hide.

ANGLE ON SQUAD CAR #1

Filling frame - the Cops grinning.

ANGLE ON SQUAD CAR #2

Filling frame - the Cops grinning.

BACK TO BATMAN

He stands his ground. Then - curiously - runs directly at the first squad car.

ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD - SQUAD CAR #1

COP #1
What the...?

BACK TO BATMAN - SLOW MOTION SHOT

With a perfectly timed leap, Batman vaults onto the hood of the car in a somersault and does a complete 360 - up the windshield - over the roof - off the trunk - lands on the pavement with the grace of a cat.

ANGLE ON TWO POLICE CARS

They crash head-on with a sickening sound of crunching metal and flying glass. Two groggy Police exit, front doors falling off, try to clear their heads.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - DAWN

The first orange rays of the morning sun stab upwards through the clouds over Wayne Manor.

INT. YOUNG BRUCE'S LAB - DAY

Young Bruce Wayne's lab room remains much as we remember it, except that the gaping hole in the wall caused by the laser has been reinforced and shaped into a doorway. A make-shift ladder-like stairway leads down into the cavern below.

FOOTSTEPS are heard climbing the ladder from deep within the cave. After a moment, Bruce appears, stripped to the waist, still wearing his utility belt and the bottom half of his Batman suit. His chest and stomach are nicked with small cuts and bruises from his previous night's work. His forehead glistens with sweat born of utter exhaustion. He sits heavily on a cot, buries his face in his hands, looks up suddenly as the door to the lab opens.

Alfred enters, stares silently, first appalled by Bruce's physical condition, then shaking his head with sympathy. Bruce stares back, eyes heavy with lack of sleep.

BRUCE
You...think I'm crazy, don't you?
Certifiably insane.

ALFRED
(pause; smile)
A bit...eccentric, perhaps.

BRUCE
It's...what I have to do, Alfred.
After all those years of searching
-- it was always what I had to do.

ALFRED
If I may be permitted, Sir...
(with difficulty)
I've...never had any children of my
own. Never saw the advantage in it,
considering my profession. I've
always thought myself more talented
at raising flowers than people...

Bruce looks up with a warm smile of gratitude.

ALFRED
Oh, I didn't raise you, Sir, I
simply watched you grow.

INSERT SHOT - GOTHAM TRIBUNE

A Banner edition of the Gotham Tribune cartwheels INTO FRAME: On the front page: fanciful artist's renditions drawn from eyewitness recollections of the Batman.

One is of a menacing black vampire with long, pointed fangs. Another show a dark, furry giant with huge feathered wings. Above them the headline: BAT-MAN INVADES CITY. MASS HYSTERIA GRIPS GOTHAM. POLICE

NO MATCH FOR WINGED INTRUDER.

CAMERA HOLDS on the newspaper as we hear the jumbled and excited VOICES of REPORTERS underneath:

REPORTER'S VOICE
Commissioner, how do you explain this
Fantastic phenomenon?

GORDON'S VOICE
I can't explain it. I only hope for the
poor fellow's sake, he's sobered up by now.

EXT. GOTHAM COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Bruce lies on a deck chair by the swimming pool of the Gotham Country Club, his body coated with sun oil. He listens to Gordon's TV press conference on a tiny transistor set next to him. His eyes flutter open with amusement.

TV REPORTER
Well considering the fact he apprehended
four criminals last night, shouldn't we
be calling him...a good Samaritan?

GORDON
Sure. If you feel like calling John
Hinkley a political activist.

Bruce's eyes suddenly bulge wider. He gazes across the swimming pool, transfixated by what he sees.

ANGLE ON SILVER - BRUCE'S P.O.V.

A stunning-looking woman (SILVER ST. CLOUD) steps out onto the high board of the pool, dressed in a daringly-cut shiny white latex tank suit. A shining mane of glistening silver hair cascades down across her shoulders. She pauses, a shimmering white diamond in the sun.

REPORTER'S VOICE
Commissioner, it might surprise you
to know that several polls taken
today show more than eighty percent
of those interviewed approve of
this...vigilante and what he did...

Silver glances over in Bruce's direction. Curiously enough, she seems to smile at him and wave.

GORDON'S VOICE
Well I can't account for public
taste, but I'd like to warn any
potential copy cats who may be out
there that...

BACK TO BRUCE

Bruce is stunned and confused, but starts to lift his hand to wave back when:

THORNE'S VOICE
If brains were bodies, she'd look
just the same. Can you believe it?

Bruce swivels, lowering his hand. Thorne stands behind him, waves back at Silver who executes a complicated but perfect dive into the pool. She starts to swim across in their direction as Thorne grins down at Bruce.

THORNE
Name's Silver St. Cloud. Phi Beta Kappa, Masters Degree in Political Science. Just arrived in Gotham to finish her doctorate on municipal government and guess which City councilman drew her as an intern?

BRUCE
(staring)
Taught her much so far?

THORNE
(chuckle)
Not as much as I plan to.

Silver reaches the edge of the pool. Thorne starts to help her out as Bruce continues to start.

SILVER
The water's glorious, Rupert. Come on in.

THORNE
Never had time to learn how to swim.
Too busy trying to make a living, I guess. Not like Mr. Wayne over here...
(chuckle)
Right, Bruce?
(turns)
Silver St. Cloud - Bruce Wayne.

Bruce looks up, totally mesmerized by the sight of her. She gazes down with a devastating smile, the sun sparkling off the beads of water on her face. She is instantly and equally smitten as they lock eyes.

SILVER
Please don't get up.

BRUCE
(lost)
Hmm?

SILVER
I said - please don't get up.

BRUCE
Oh.
(starts to get up)
Sorry...

SILVER
That's all right. I asked you not
to, remember?

BRUCE
(stops)
So you did. Thanks.

SILVER
Don't mention it.

Rupert watches them watching each other. The uncomfortable silence is filled by Gordon's VOICE from the television.

GORDON'S VOICE
And now, if there are no other
questions, it's my birthday tonight and
I have a formal party to get ready
for...

Thorne reaches down, turns off the TV in disgust.

THORNE
That clown has been a disgrace to
law enforcement his entire career.
This city's going to hell in a
handbasket and some imbecile's giving
him a formal birthday party.

BRUCE
It should be fun. I'm giving it.

Thorne raises his eyebrows. Silver still stares.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Perhaps the two of you would like to
come?

THORNE
SILVER
I'm busy, thanks.
I'd love to.

THORNE
(irritated)
Silver, I don't think...ah...

SILVER
If I'm not being too inquisitive,

Mr. Wayne - exactly what is it you do?

BRUCE

Do?

SILVER

For a living?

THORNE

(chuckles)

You're looking at it.

BRUCE

Actually, Rupert's not being entirely fair about his...

(nice smile)

Sometimes I go hang gliding.

SILVER

And that's it?

BRUCE

Not quite.

SILVER

I didn't think so.

BRUCE

I have a dog as well.

Silver manages a tiny, unsure smile.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Wayne Manor. Eight o'clock. I'll have my car pick you up.

THORNE

Why don't you take my car, Silver?
In case you want to leave early.

SILVER

I'm very flattered by the dueling limos, gentlemen, but I can grab a cab, thanks.

(nods)

Mr. Wayne...

Silver excuses herself. Both men watch her departure avidly.

THORNE

Gotham City's no place for a beautiful woman to be travelling alone. I'm holding you personally responsible for her safety, Wayne.

BRUCE

Don't worry, Rupert. I'll treat her just as if I were in love with her instead of you.

Thorne's eyes narrow. Bruce smiles ingenuously.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

Dozens of expensive cars disgorge their passengers in front of stately Wayne Manor.

INT. WAYNE MANOR LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A lavish party is in progress. A DANCE BAND plays off to the side, under a banner reading "Happy Birthday to the Finest of Gotham's Finest."

Bruce Wayne greets his arriving GUESTS, his neck craning around in vain for a sight of Silver.

Gordon stands by the bar, downs a double scotch, scowls at GUESTS who talks animatedly to him while flapping his arms like wings - doing a crude imitation of the Batman. The Guest howls with laughter, moves off as Gordon orders another drink and Bruce joins him with a sympathetic smile.

BRUCE

They're giving you a pretty hard time about that Batman, aren't they...

Gordon nods, tosses back his drink angrily.

GORDON

I'd give up half my pension to be standing face to face with that caped fruitcake right now.

(looks off; stares)

Now there's a sight to make an old man's eyes water.

Silver St. Cloud approaches them, threading her way through the appreciative glances of the Guests, dressed in a sparkling, metallic evening gown, the light bouncing off it like tiny bursts of shooting stars. She reaches Bruce, extends her hand with a warm smile.

SILVER

I hope I'm not too late.

GORDON

In my case, by twenty years.

BRUCE

Silver, St. Cloud - this is David Gordon, Commissioner of Police. Miss St. Cloud is picking up the finer points of the city government from

Councilman Thorne.

SILVER

My ambition is to hold a job as important as yours one day, Commissioner.

GORDON

Then you and Mr. Thorne already have much in common.

SILVER

(suddenly)

Would you care to dance, Mr. Wayne?

BRUCE

(locking eyes)

You're as clairvoyant as you are beautiful, Miss St. Cloud.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

Now heading into the driveway is a brightly painted version of an old-time twenties paddy wagon, with two look-alikes of the old KEYSTONE KOPS riding on top. They honk a comical horn loudly as laughing PARKING ATTENDANTS greet them

INT. WAYNE MANOR - ANGLE ON DANCE FLOOR

Bruce and Silver glide smoothly across the floor - a perfect fit. Bruce looks down curiously.

SILVER

Something wrong?

BRUCE

You're...leading.

SILVER

I asked you, remember?

Alfred arrives, interrupting them.

ALFRED

Excuse me, Sir, but there are some oddly dressed gentlemen outside with a singing telegram for the Commissioner.

BRUCE

Ask them to come in, will you, Alfred?

Bruce makes his way to the bandstand, whispers some instructions to the BANDLEADER. A LOUD FANFARE is played. All conversation stops as the front door opens.

Now entering Wayne Manor: the Two Keystone Kops, in their twenties'

costumes with handlebar moustaches. They dance their way to the center of the room in a prearranged routine, singing in harmony from *Pirates of Penzance*.

KOPS
When a felon's not engaged in his employment,
Or maturing his felonious little plans,
His capacity for innocent enjoyment
Is just as great as any honest man's...
Oh, a policeman's lot is not a happy one....

The Guests applaud loudly. Gordon joins Bruce and Silver as the Kops break into a vaudeville routine.

KOP
Excuse me, Sir. Have you seen a policeman around here?

KOP #2
Why no, I haven't.

KOP
(drawing gun)
Good. Then give me your watch.

Several Guests laugh. Bruce winces at the bad joke.

KOP #2
But this watch isn't worth anything.
It only has a sentimental value.

KOP
Well give it to me anyway. I feel like a good cry.

Gordon laughs loudly as the Kop turns to him.

KOP (CONT'D)
Now, Commissioner, if we could borrow your watch for a moment...

GORDON
(taking it off)
Sure. Be careful with it, okay?

The Kop smiles, takes the watch, dangles it from his hand. Kop #2 silently sidles in behind Bruce and Silver.

KOP
Here's a good one: what's a policeman's favorite way to kill time?

GORDON
(grinning)
I'll bite. What is a policeman's
favorite way to kill time?

The Kop grins, pull his gun - FIRES! Gordon's watch is smashed to smithereens. Kop #2's gun suddenly at the back of Silver's head, hammer cocked.

KOP #2
Up against the wall, everybody!
Move!!

The Guests scream as six more Kops burst through the front door carrying automatic weapons. Bruce, Silver, and Gordon are herded back against the wall with the others.

The KOP grins, then suddenly starts to giggle insanely. He takes off his helmet, as a shock of GREEN HAIR is exposed! He wipes his lips clean which now become ruby red. Cackling in glee, THE JOKER faces his victims, his gaze suddenly becoming cruel and cold.

JOKER
One at a time, your money and your
jewels, and no one's head'll wind
up looking like the Commissioner's
watch, capisce?

KOP #3
Hey, boss! Look!

The Joker turns. Kop #3 and a PARTNER have set Gordon's huge birthday cake on the floor, now wade through it, stomping up and down, kicking the insides across the room.

KOP #3
We're doing the cake walk!

The Joker giggles, then shoots a satanically maniacal look at the Guests who instantly begin stripping off their jewelry, taking out wallets, etc. as more Kops pass by with a gunny sack. The Joker walks down the line, stopping to level a searching and curious gaze into the eyes of:

Bruce Wayne, between Gordon and Silver, his face set, eyes steely, staring at the Joker. His jaw twitches.

Silver watches him, noticing the twitch. She gives him a tiny, sympathetic smile, then turns to face:

Kop #2, who has moved down the line to Silver. He looks her up and down hungrily as she stares back in defiance. His fingers slowly reach up to grip her necklace, then linger.

KOP #2
In your case, lady, I'd like to
rip the rest off and leave this on.

Suddenly: BRUCE'S FIST FLASHES INTO FRAME! Kop #2 is knocked backward through the air as another Kop lunges at Bruce who grabs the gunny sack filled with jewelry and bashes him in the face! The Kop crumples to the floor as Bruce wheels to face the Joker and sees:

The Joker, grinning cruelly, the barrel of his gun pressing up under Silver's chin. Her eyes are welded shut with fear.

JOKER

Now that was extremely bad manners,
Mr. Wayne. Especially from someone...
(gestures)
...to the Manor born...
(giggles)
So why don't you rejoin the lady here,
or if you like...
(cocks gun; glowers)
I can send part of her over to you.

Bruce hesitates, then rejoins the line. The Joker lowers his gun, turns to stare at a painting on the wall as a Kop holds out the open gunny sack to Gordon.

GORDON

(to Joker)

I'll see you rot in the gas chamber
for this.

The Joker smiles, ignoring him, looking at the portrait painting which is of a distinguished older man. He removes it from the wall. An indignant Alfred speaks up from farther down the line of Guests.

ALFRED

Be careful, you clot! That portrait
goes back to Mr. Wayne's grandfather!

JOKER

Why? Is there something wrong with
it?

The Joker cackles, punching the painting out of its frame.

CLOSE ON BRUCE AND SILVER

Bruce stares silently. His jaw twitches with anger born of humiliation. Silver notices again.

SILVER

(whisper)

Look on the bright side. You're
adorable when your jaw twitches.

BACK TO SCENE

The Joker crosses to Gordon with the empty picture frame. Another Kop points a camera as the Joker holds the frame up to encircle his and

Gordon's face.

JOKER
(giggling)
I've always wanted to frame a Police
Commissioner...

CLOSE ON JOKER'S AND GORDON'S FACES

Gordon shuts his eyes in disgrace. The Joker howls with glee.

THE FLASHBULB STROBE WIPES THE SCENE!

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

The Kops exit Wayne Manor with their loot, climb back into the paddy wagon, roar out of the driveway.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

The terrified and disgruntled Guests head for the door as Bruce and Silver look over at a devastated Gordon.

BRUCE
I'm afraid the tabloids are going
to have a field day with this, David.
Not to mention Rupert Thorne.

ALFRED
(joining them)
I tried calling the police. The
phone line seems to have been cut.

GORDON
I'll report it myself, Alfred.
Right before I cut my throat.

He tries to check his watch, stares at an empty wrist, sighs, then joins the stream of departing Guests as Bruce looks over at Silver glumly.

BRUCE
Well. Good-night. I guess...

SILVER
(sudden grin)
Why don't be silly. I've only just
arrived.

BRUCE
(smile)
Would you care to dance, Miss St. Cloud?

SILVER
(offering her arm)
You're as clairvoyant as you are
gallant, Mr. Wayne...

EXT. GOTHAM POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A crestfallen Gordon exits his car in front of Police Headquarters.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Gordon walks slowly and dejectedly down the nearly deserted hallway. As he passes one DETECTIVE'S cubicle, the sound of SNICKERING is HEARD from inside.

Gordon stops defiantly. The snickering instantly dies away. Muttering disgustedly, Gordon enters his office.

INT. GORDON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The office is lit only by a small desk lamp. Strung up behind the desk is a crudely-made banner reading: HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR COMMISH - FROM ALL YOUR BOYS IN BLUE.

Gordon shakes his head sadly, crosses to a cabinet, pours himself an enormous glass of Scotch, then crosses with the bottle to the open office window. He takes a long swig, exhales, then slams the window shut.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

The Wayne Manor driveway is deserted under the moonlight.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

The band plays a soft, dreamy number as Bruce and Silver dance together dreamily, locked in each other's arm, drifting silently through the vast living room.

CLOSER ON THEM

Silver's eyes flutter open, then lock into his.

SILVER
Maybe you'd better take me home...

BRUCE
I am home...

SILVER
(soft murmur)
You see...I don't do anything on
the first date...

BRUCE
Don't be so hard on yourself...You're
doing just fine...

He draws her in more tightly as they glide across the floor.

EXT. SILVER'S APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

Bruce's Aston-Martin is parked in front of an unassuming apartment house in middle-class Gotham.

INT. SILVER'S APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

Bruce escorts Silver down the modest, clean hallway.

SILVER

Thank you for a totally unexpected evening, Bruce. I like surprises...

She stops at a door, inserts her key, turns, smiles.

SILVER (CONT'D)

Including you.

BRUCE

Oh? How did...

(smile)

Rupert Thorne describe me?

SILVER

As a rather ineffectual playboy.
But pleasant enough in a harmless
sort of way.

BRUCE

Like an affable grasshopper bouncing
around in the middle of all you
hard-working ants...

SILVER

Something like that.

Bruce takes her hand gently, stares deeply into her eyes.

BRUCE

And you? How would you describe me?

SILVER

(staring back)

I don't think you're harmless. And
I don't think anyone who's looked
straight in your eyes could say so.

Bruce's jaw twitches involuntarily. Silver grins. He leans in, kisses her lingeringly on the mouth. They break. He gazes into her disoriented eyes.

BRUCE

Frightened?

SILVER

Terrified...but don't worry...

(soft smile)

As a kid they always had to drag me
off the roller coaster.

They kiss again, passionately. She looks up, confused.

SILVER (CONT'D)
I sleep I'll get some think now...

She turns key, slips through the door, closing it again.

Bruce sighs, slumps back heavily against the wall, realizing a dilemma
he may never be able to solve.

EXT. GOTHAM SKYLINE - NIGHT

The yellow moon glows brightly over Gotham City.

INT. GORDON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Gordon is slumped over his desk, mumbling to himself in a half-drunken
stupor. The bottle of Scotch next to him has clearly been emptied.

Suddenly - a gust of cold wind ruffles his hair. His eyes flutter,
then look over at the open office window.

GORDON
Thought I closed that Goddamn thing...

He staggers to the window, looks out sadly.

BATMAN'S VOICE
Whatever you do - don't jump.

Gordon whirls. Batman looms up from a dark corner.

BATMAN (CONT'D)
We've been at odds, Commissioner,
and it's Gotham's loss. My fight
isn't with you. It's with the
diseased scum infesting this city.

Gordon backs up toward his desk, smiles nervously.

GORDON
Of course it is...

BATMAN
Criminals are a cowardly lot at heart.
But human garbage like the Joker is
taking over Gotham - in spite of
everything that you and other men of
good will can do about it.

GORDON
Don't you preach law and order to
me, you...

BATMAN

The people need a symbol. Someone to rally around. Someone who isn't hamstrung by the very laws he's sworn to uphold, whose hands aren't tied with red tape. They have a right to justice.

GORDON

That I happen to agree with...
(pulls gun from
drawer)

That's why you're under arrest.

Gordon levels the gun. They are frozen for a moment. Batman advances slowly. He speaks in measured tones, eyes clear, voice almost hypnotic.

BATMAN

You won't pull that trigger because you realize I'm your last chance. You're fighting a war you've already lost and you know it.

Batman stands inches away from the gun barrel now. Gordon peers deeply into his eyes through the cowl.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

With your blessing - with you cooperation - together we could rid the streets of Gotham of violence and corruption.

Gordon blinks. His gun hand wavers.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

We share the same dream, Gordon. You know we do. Trust your intuition. Join me.

Batman extends a black-gloved hand.

CLOSE ON HAND

The hand holds steady, the gun pointed directly at it.

BACK TO THEM

The Caped Crusader's gaze rivets Gordon to the spot.

BACK TO HANDS

A beat. Gordon's gun drops to the floor. His hand grasps the black glove tightly.

EXT. GOTHAM POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

CAMERA ZOOMS up the building, WHIPPING INTO the night sky:

Seen for the first time: THE GLOWING BAT SIGNAL! The silhouetted yellow ball knives up through the night over Gotham, seeming to glow more brightly than the moon!

Underneath, WE HEAR a cacophony of REPORTERS' VOICES:

REPORTER

This is Jack Havemeyer,
Gotham Eyewitness News.
The amazing Batman has
struck again, apprehending
two armed robbers at...

REPORTER #2

Ann Ford, Gotham News at
Ten. The Black Knight has saved
yet another innocent citizen,
this time at...

REPORTER #3

The Joker's gang was in for a rude
awakening early this morning when...

CAMERA PANS DOWN FROM the night sky to:

EXT. GIRDER BUILDING - NIGHT

We are on top of a partially constructed building - a maze of interconnecting steel girders, jutting out over the black waters of Gotham River.

A WIRY, WEASEL-FACED MAN (JIMMY MALONE) stands on a top girder some forty floors above the water, seems to be aiming his gun into the blackness.

MALONE

Stay away from me!

EXT. GIRDERS - NIGHT

Malone trembles, squints into the dark, hears A VOICE:

BATMAN'S VOICE

I think we've run out of floors.

A black cape swirls around the side of a girder. Malone panics, squeezes the trigger RAPID FIRE! Then - silence.

BATMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Floors - and bullets.

Now stepping out onto the girder, emerging from the blackness: THE BATMAN! His huge black cape billows out ominously.

ANGLE ON GORDON

Gordon, Haley, and a mob of Reporters watch tensely from below where a gang of handcuffed Crooks is being led off by the police.

BACK TO GIRDERS

Malone inches back on the uppermost girder which juts out over the river. He clicks his gun - empty - throws it at the Batman, missing him. The Batman advances coldly.

BATMAN

They say a cornered rat can be dangerous. You don't look so tough.

As Batman advances, suddenly: HIS FOOT SLIPS! He tumbles over the side of the girder, hangs on, his fingers jammed into the rivet holes!

ANGLE ON BELOW

An audible GASP from the assembled audience.

BACK TO BATMAN

Straining to hold on, his fingers almost coming out of their sockets. He looks down: the network of girders dissolves dizzyingly into black.

Malone starts forward, grinning broadly.

MALONE

Here. Lemme give you a hand...

Malone claps loudly. Batman winces, hangs on.

MALONE (CONT'D)

Now a foot...

Malone brings one show down hard on Batman's hand, grinds it in. Then, the other foot on the remaining hand. Batman grimaces in unbelievable pain.

Suddenly: Batman swings his leg back! He bursts forward again in an arc, propelling his feet under the girder and up again around the other side. His boots crash into the back of Malone's legs - launching him out into space with an agonizing scream!

The Batman stands on the girder, looking down. He gives a tiny salute, then DIVES OUT INTO THE NIGHT! Sailing down through the blackness for more than a hundred feet, he hits the river with an enormous splash, then disappears.

BACK TO GORDON

Gordon watches, stunned, as a Reporter comes up.

REPORTER

Incredible! Who is he,
Commissioner? Can you let us in on it?

GORDON
(suddenly crafty)
I'd like to, but...I'm afraid that
information's classified.

The Reporter walks off, muttering angrily. Haley looks sideways at Gordon in disbelief.

GORDON
(exploding)
Goddamnit, Haley, do I have to tell
you every little thing?

INT. RUPERT THORNE'S OFFICE - DAY

CAMERA PANS DOWN from the Gotham City logo: TRUTH, JUSTICE, INTERGRITY to the face of Rupert Thorne, a cigar wedged between gritted teeth, watching a TV across the room.

TV REPORTER'S VOICE
...reporting live from the Gotham
Museum where Batman has caught the
Penny Plunderers. Criminals are
Rapidly becoming an endangered
Species here in Gotham, thanks to...

There is a KNOCK. The door opens. Silver enters with some papers for Thorne, pauses to look at the set.

SILVER
That Batman's something, isn't he?
(hands over papers)
For once in our lives, a real,
honest-to-God hero.

THORNE
(forced smile)
Oh, he's some piece of work, all
right...

Thorne takes the papers. Silver exits as he glares back at the set from which we now HEAR BATMAN'S VOICE.

BATMAN'S VOICE
...but the credit really belongs
to the citizens of this city and
their elected officials, who've bent
over backwards...

THORNE
(chomping cigar)
Then kiss my ass.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

THE YELLOW BAT SIGNAL explodes up into the night sky!

EXT. GOTHAM HARBOR - NIGHT

A dirty, stained tramp steamer lies at anchor in Gotham Harbor. A POCK-MARKED CAPTAIN whispers down to TWO CONFEDERATES in a dinghy below.

CAPTAIN
You can tell the Joker his drugs are
on their way. Now get the hell out
of here.

The dinghy puts off into the night. The Captain turns.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Weigh anchor!

ANGLE ON SIDE OF SHIP

The huge anchor chain rumbles up the side of the ship's prow. Now emerging from UNDER THE WATER - THE BATMAN! He rides the anchor chain up toward the deck.

INT. SILVER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Silver peddles away on an exercycle in her apartment, dressed in a nightie, avidly watching the Late News.

TV REPORTER
...the biggest drug bust in the
history of Gotham City! Where will
The Dark Avenger appear next? Who
knows? Maybe everywhere!

SILVER
(churning away)
My door's unlocked, you big hunk...

EXT. FLAMING BUILDING - NIGHT

A TOWERING INFERNAL engulfs a building in a poor section of town. Flames shoot out of the upper floors as a DISTRAUGHT MOTHER pleads with the FIREMEN.

MOTHER
But my baby! My baby's still in
there!

FIRE CAPTAIN
It's impossible, lady! I can't send
My men into that tinderbox!

FIREMAN
(staring up in awe)

Look!!

ANGLE ON BATMAN - THEIR P.O.V.

The Batman lands on top of the burning building! Hooking his nylon cord securely, he shields his face with his cape, then launches himself downwards, swinging straight through a window in a SHOWER OF GLASS AND FLAMES!

After an agonizing moment - he reappears! He cradles a BAWLING BABY in his arms, covers it with his cape, then quickly shimmies down into the street.

INT. JOKER'S LAIR - DAY

The Joker paces angrily as the TV blares:

TV REPORTER'S VOICE
...here at Gotham Amusement Park
where - if you can believe it -
the Batman has subdued a mechanical
dinosaur, thus foiling the Joker's
plot to...

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Once again: THE GLOWING BAT SIGNAL whips up into the night!

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

TWO CROOKS run across a rooftop, carrying a bag of loot, heading for a helicopter which waits, blades whirring. They reach the chopper, look behind them as:

ANGLE ON BATMAN - THEIR P.O.V.

The Batman lands on the opposite side of the roof, some twenty yards away.

CROOK #1
(looking back)
Sorry, Batman. Gotta fly now...

The Crooks pile into the helicopter, laughing loudly. It starts to take off, rising quickly.

BACK TO BATMAN

His jaw twitches. He unhooks the BATARANG from the front of his utility belt. (NOTE: This is a black, bat-shaped boomerang, attached to his nylon cord.

The helicopter rises as: The Batman hurls his Batarang!

CLOSE ON ROTOR SHAFT

The Batarang whistles around the spinning rotor shaft which connects

the helicopter bubble cockpit to the rear rotor blades. It hooks tight.

WIDER ANGLE

The helicopter takes off into the night sky as the Batman is jerked free of the building top, NOW DANGLES IN MID-AIR as the chopper continues over Gotham!

ANGLE DOWN ON BATMAN

Suspended more than a thousand feet in the air, looking up at the helicopter above him.

ANGLE ON ROTOR SHAFT

The rotor shaft spins, the Batarang cord encircling it. The nylon cord wraps itself around the shaft as the Batman is now being pulled up LIKE A FISH ON THE LINE!

WIDER ANGLE

As the Batman rises toward the chopper through the night sky.

INT. HELICOPTER

The PILOT struggles with the controls. A CROOK looks over.

CROOK
What the hell's wrong?

PILOT
Can't figure it...I have to
compensate for something on the port
side...

The Crook looks over to his left: The night sky is clear through the bubble cockpit.

Now suddenly rising into view: THE FACE OF BATMAN, staring in coldly from outside the cockpit!

Then: WE HEAR THE SOUND OF TREMENDOUS OVATION!

INT. GOTHAM BALLROOM - NIGHT

Hundreds of Guests applaud heartily in a hotel ballroom. Gotham's MAYOR stands in front of a podium at the center of a dais which includes Batman, Gordon, and Rupert Thorne.

MAYOR
...and so, in giving him the keys to
Gotham, I proclaim our Batman this
city's Man of The Year. Year?
Hell! The Man of a Lifetime!

A rousing ovation! Batman rises to join the Mayor at the podium,

shaking hands with Dignitaries on his way by.

ANGLE ON SILVER

Silver stands by one of the front table, applauds heartily.

ANGLE ON BATMAN

Shaking hands with Gordon, then with an overly enthusiastic Rupert Thorne, who claps him on the back, Knute Rockne-like.

INT. JOKER'S LAIR - NIGHT

A grim-faced Joker watches the festivities on television, slumped behind a harlequin desk in his darkened lair.

BATMAN ON TV

Thank you, Mr. Mayor...

(at Crowd)

Let me be brief...

The Joker lifts what look like a remote control box, presses a button:

THE TELEVISION EXPLODES, WIPIING THE SCREEN!

EXT. GOTHAM PARK ZOO - DAY

CAMERA CLOSE on a zoo enclosure filled with live penguins. A KEEPER tosses them sardines as ONLOOKERS watch.

SILVER'S VOICE

Aren't they adorable in their little dinner jackets?

Silver, holding a big pink balloon, stands watching them in the crowd with Bruce.

BRUCE

Actually, it looks like a convention of maitre d's...

SILVER

Maitre d's?

(sideways look)

So you are familiar with eating out at night...

She turns, smiling to herself. Bruce catches her drift.

BRUCE

Silver, look...I know it must seem very rude, my not asking you out to dinner...

SILVER

But you've been terribly busy...

BRUCE
I have, as a matter of fact. I...I...

SILVER
(hurt)
Bruce, my lunch hour's practically over. Exactly what is it you want to say?

BRUCE
(swallowing hard)
That...you should forget about me. Rupert was right. I am a grasshopper. You deserve somebody more ...worthwhile. Somebody you could wind up...respecting.

SILVER
(pause; smile)
Now tell me the truth.

BRUCE
The truth is...I can never be in love with anyone. I'm too selfish.
In fact, I'm all I need.
(pause)
That's the truth.

Silver looks up softly with eyes which could melt steel.

SILVER
Liar...

She kisses him passionately, hands him her balloon, then walks away. Bruce stares, stunned and dejected.

CAMERA PANS across to one large penguin, ZOOMS IN as it preens its flightless wings:

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

INT. PENGUIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

CAMERA PANS a spacious bedroom which is entirely decorated in black and white. A huge, four-poster bed dominates, covered by a piece of drapery in the shape of an open umbrella, also in black and white. It frames the figure of THE PENGUIN who lies in bed, an ice pack on his head, a thermometer sticking out of his mouth.

This is an elegant man, dressed in a white robe with a black collar, propped up on black silk sheets against black-and-white checkered pillows. A COOING SOUND makes him glance at a partially opened window where a pigeon has landed, now looks at him questioningly. The Penguin makes a clucking birdlike sound of welcome which the pigeon seems to recognize. It flies over to his bed, hops up into his lap.

A STATUESQUE WOMAN (EMPERESS) enters, carrying a tureen of shrimp embedded in ice. She wears a tight wool body stocking, a muffler wrapped around her neck.

EMPERESS

Here, sweetie. Eat them while they're nice and frozen. Feel better?

PENGUIN

A smidge.

The Penguin removes his thermometer, looks at it.

PENGUIN (O.S.)

Sixty-five degrees. Normal. I can't understand it...

He takes a bite of frozen shrimp, removes the ice pack from his head, slips it inside his robe. He leans in, tugs on the Empress' muffler gently, smiles.

PENGUIN (CONT'D)

Feel life...feathering the nest for a while?

EMPERESS

If you'll let me turn the thermostat up to forty. That was our deal, remember?

He strokes her face tenderly, makes his clucking sound. Shivers runs up and down her body.

PENGUIN

Confess. Where you're with me, it's always Honolulu in your heart.

EMPERESS

Are you kidding? It's so cold in here a flasher would have described himself.

There is a KNOCK from the doorway. A seven-foot, sallow-looking BUTLER (MARIBOU) with a vulture-like face appears.

MARIBOU

Excuse me, Mr. Penguin. Your luncheon guest has arrived.

PENGUIN

Thank you, Maribou...

MARIBOU

May I take your luncheon order now, Sir?

The pigeon coos from the Penguin's lap. He looks down.

PENGUIN
Why, yes, Maribou. Yes, you may...

His hand wanders BELOW FRAME. We hear the sound of a neck snapping. The Empress turns away in disgust.

INT. PENGUIN'S DINING ROOM - DAY

An elegant dining room. At one end of a checkered black-and-white table: the Penguin. Dressed in white tie and tails, he pops an icy codfish ball into his mouth.

PENGUIN
Even for a criminal as phenomenally gifted as I - this is indeed an honor, Sir.

At the other end - the Joker, teeth chattering, not touching his food. Wrapped in a heavy overcoat with muffler and earmuffs, he blows into his hands. Four sets of candelabra are drawn in around him for warmth.

JOKER
Nice little meat locker you got here.
Who'd you buy it from, Bird's Eye?

A frozen giggle collapses. The Penguin blinks stoically.

PENGUIN
I'm heart-broken you haven't touched your food. I had that clown fish cooked especially for you.
(gestures)
Do you prefer codfish balls?

JOKER
I don't know. I never attended any.

An insane chuckle rises, then dies, teeth chattering.

JOKER
But seriously, Big Bird...
(eyes narrowing)
I need a favor.

PENGUIN
Outside of possibly offering you a brain scan - how may I be of help?

JOKER
(philosophical)
I've worked hard to make Gotham a city we could all be proud of. The kind of place where an ambitious young hood could come home after a hard day dealing drugs and get some peaceful sleep at night. But all that was B.B.

PENGUIN
Before Batman.

JOKER
Rimshot. I'd like to send that
cowled cop-lover on a little trip
tomorrow night.
(leans in)
But I'm going to need you to
provide the flight insurance.
(giggle)
Which reminds me. Do you know what
you get when you make love to the
wrong canary?

PENGUIN
(sigh)
I haven't a clue.

JOKER
Twerpes!

He explodes with laughter. The Penguin stares blankly.

JOKER (CONT'D)
Not only that - but the disease is
completely untweetable!

The Penguin winces sadly, lowers his eyes as the Joker slams his semi-frozen clown fish against his plate, his body wracked by uncontrollable guffaws.

INT. BATCAVE - DAY

Alfred holds an aerosol wax can and a cloth. He polishes an enormous white animal tooth.

ALFRED
With all this extra cleaning to do,
Sir, do you mind if I engage
additional staff for the mansion?

An acetylene torch whines in reply.

WIDE ANGLE - BATCAVE

We see the Batcave for the first time: The gothic cavern walls are now spotless. Alfred stands on a ladder, polishing a tooth of a mechanical Tyrannosaurus Rex. Next to it is the giant penny. This, along with other exhibits, is the trophy section.

CAMERA PANS: One area of the cave is devoted to exercise - weights, Nautilus machines, rings - even a trapeze. The acetylene torch whines.

CAMERA PANS: Another section features a myriad of complicated machines and a fully equipped crime lab.

PAST the crime lab: Bruce lies on his back under a partially constructed futuristic automobile. He trains an acetylene torch against one section as the sparks fly. It's just the shell of a car now - other sections and odd electronic devices are strewn about the area. Bruce shuts off his torch, removes a faceplate, reaches back for a long cylindrical network of crisscrossing cables. He starts to fit it onto one underside edge of the chassis.

BRUCE
I'm sorry, Alfred. Did you say something?

ALFRED
(noticing cylinder)
What on earth is all that metallic spaghetti in aid of?

BRUCE
There's a Magnum pistol in the table drawer over there. Take it out, would you?

Alfred descends the ladder as Bruce rises, crosses to two larger versions of the cabled cylinders. They stand upright, some eight feet apart from each other. Bruce leans down, opens the top of a large transformer box.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
I've connected two mega-transformer leads to form a force field of a million volts.

Bruce flips a switch - dazzling blue light begins to dance between the cable cylinders. Alfred turns with the gun in his hands as Bruce calls to him from behind the sparkling wall of blue light.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Shoot me.

ALFRED
Pardon?

BRUCE
Shoot to kill. Aim for the heart.

ALFRED
I...assume this apparatus has been thoroughly tested, Sir?

BRUCE
We're doing it right now.

Alfred stares incredulously, the gun shaking in his hand.

ALFRED
Sir...if you've miscalculated...

BRUCE
Be a good soldier, Alfred.
(pause)
Shoot. Now!

Alfred straightens his arm, his finger squeezing the trigger.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
(suddenly)
Wait!

TOO LATE: Alfred fires! The bullet bounces off the blue wall of light, then ricochets back at Alfred, pinging into the cavern wall next to his head! Alfred hits the deck as the lead cartridge continues a seemingly endless path of ricochets until there is sudden silence.

Alfred rises, sweat dripping from his brow. Bruce grins, turning off the blue light.

BRUCE
I forgot to tell you to duck.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY HALL - NIGHT

A taxi pulls up to the darkened City Hall. Silver exits, starts up the steps.

INT. CITY HALL - NIGHT

Silver enters, crosses the lobby to the elevators. A GUARD looks up from his night desk.

GUARD
Just a minute, Miss....

SILVER
It's okay, Victor, it's...
(sees him)
Where's Victor?

GUARD
Victor's...sick tonight. What's
your name?

SILVER
St. Cloud. I'm on Councilman
Thorne's staff. Just catching up on
a little back work.

GUARD
The doors are all locked up there,
Miss, and...I'm not authorized to
open them.

Silver dangles her key with a pleasant smile, passes by him, enters the elevator. The doors close. The nervous Guard picks up a house phone.

GUARD

There's a girl named Silver St. Cloud on
her way up. I tried to stop her...

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

CAMERA LOOKS DOWN from the main gears of the elevator at a seemingly endless shaft of cables. The car carrying Silver rises quickly, jerks to a stop at one of the top floors.

INT. CITY HALL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Silver exits the elevator, starts down the corridor for her office door. She passes Thorne's office, then stops, hearing MUFFLED VOICES from inside.

SILVER

Rupert?...

There is a sudden silence. Silver cocks her head curiously.

SILVER (CONT'D)

Rupert, it's Silver...

Silver opens the door, suddenly recoils, aghast:

ANGLE ON THORNE - HER P.O.V.

Thorne sits behind his desk, bound and gagged, tied to the chair. His eyes bulge in terror as Silver rushes in.

SILVER

Rupert, what happened!

JOKER'S VOICE

You like that gag?

Silver wheels to face the Joker behind her!

JOKER

Well, here's an even better one!

A stream of clear liquid shoots out from a plastic flower on the Joker's coat lapel, drenching Silver's face as she recoils, stunned, then instantly drops to the floor. The Joker giggles as Thorne rises from behind the desk, the ropes dropping off him like spaghetti. He takes the gag out of his mouth, looks down at Silver, nervous and agitated.

THORNE

I can't get her involved. This
changes everything.

JOKER

This changes nothing.
(looks down; appre-

ciative smile)
In fact, it might even give that
black-caped creep an added incentive
to walk into our trap.

THORNE
(concerned)
How long before she wakes up?

JOKER
Half an hour.
(wicked grin)
Never, if you prefer...

THORNE
(glaring coldly)
This better work out. I warn you,
Joker - don't disappoint me.

JOKER
(crossing to door)
Please. If everyone in this country
worked as efficiently as I do, we'd
be back on the road to prosperity.
(turns; stops)
Oh. And starting tomorrow - after
the Batman's funeral - don't you
disappoint me, understood?

The Joker smiles cruelly, giggles, then disappears.

INT. BATCAVE - NIGHT

CAMERA PANS the cavernous Batcave. We HEAR the low, powerful, whining GRIND of what seem to be turbine engines. It rises in pitch and intensity, growing richer and more deafening than a 747.

The blasting SOUND is coming from behind a corner of the cave, its source unseen. But up against one wall, in a cubicle niche:

A RED TELEPHONE PULSATES WITH GLOWING LIGHT!

INT. WAYNE MANOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alfred walks down the hallway dressed for bed, stifles a yawn, notices something through the open study door.

ANGLE ON STUDY DOOR - HIS P.O.V.

The light coming from the study seems to pulsate as well, first dying, then rising. Dying, then rising.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

The pulsating light comes from a desk lamp. Alfred enters, crosses, presses a hidden button under the desk:

A bottom drawer pops open, revealing a glowing red extension of the Batphone in the cave.

Alfred shoves the drawer back, hurries out of the study.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alfred crosses the living room, heading for a tall grandfather's clock at one end. He reaches behind the clock. We HEAR a switch "CLICK." Alfred reaches behind, swivels the clock away from the wall.

The SOUND of the ENGINE WHINE becomes immediately audible. Alfred hurries through the opening in the wall.

EXT. GOTHAM SKY - NIGHT

Knifing up into the blackness over the skyline of Gotham City - THE GLEAMING BATIGNAL!

INT. THORNE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The office has been ransacked. Drawers overturned, bookcases emptied, with piles of paper and debris strewn across the floor.

Silver sits in a chair, conscious but still groggy. Thorne paces angrily in front of Gordon, kicking trash left and right as the Batman watches from inside the doorway, his eyes darting back and forth.

THORNE

It's unbelievable! The Joker!

Right here in my office!

(at Silver)

He could have killed her!

(realizes)

He could have killed me, for God's sake!

BATMAN

I wonder why he didn't...

Batman crosses, eyes riveted on Silver. She feels his magnetic gaze on her, now stares back, fascinated by him.

THORNE

You sound disappointed!

GORDON

Calm down, Rupert! We've got a long night ahead of us.

THORNE

What's this we crap?

GORDON

Well, you're the only one who'd know what was missing.

(turns)

I'll send for a squad car to drive
you home, Miss St. Cloud.

Silver nods at Gordon, then looks back into the dark, magnetically
intimidating gaze of the Batman.

SILVER
Perhaps...the Batman would be kind
enough to see me home.

THORNE
What?

Batman stares back at Silver with no apparent reaction. She smiles
unsteadily, not sure of herself.

SILVER
If I'm not too far out of your way.

BATMAN
(pause)
I can't imagine such a place exists,
Miss St. Cloud.

THORNE
Oh, brother...

Silver blushes, then rises, offers Batman her arm.

SILVER
Good-night, Rupert...

THORNE
Wait!...

Batman leads Silver out the door. Thorne's face trembles with rage and
frustration as Gordon looks over curiously.

GORDON
Relax, Rupert. Who could she be
safer with?

CAMERA PUSHES IN on Thorne's troubled face.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Batman leads Silver to the elevator, presses the button.

SILVER
We're taking the elevator?

BATMAN
Doesn't everybody?

SILVER
Why did I have this feeling we'd be
dropping out a window together, or

something exotic like that...

The elevator arrives. They enter.

INT. TOP OF ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

The main gears of the elevator shaft start to churn. Suddenly: the beam from a welding torch appears, rapidly cutting away at one of the cables.

CAMERA PANS: The Penguin hangs suspended in the shaft, supported in mid-air by the whirling ribs of a HUGE UMBRELLA hooked to the back of his belt. He trains the torch on the cable, looks down, "clucks" contently.

Suddenly: THE CABLE SNAPS!

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

A jarring jolt. The elevator suddenly drops! Silver screams as she and Batman are momentarily pushed up into the air. Batman grabs onto a light fixture in the roof, bashes the ceiling escape hatch away.

ANGLE ON ELEVATOR

Plummeting down the shaft.

BACK TO BATMAN

He reaches into his utility belt, pulls out a nail-like piece of curved metal attached to a nylon cord. It pops open into a large, four-pronged fish hook.

BATMAN
Grab my belt! Hang on!

ANGLE IN SHAFT

The hook flies out of the top of the sinking elevator heading for the wall of the shaft. It grazes down the shaft wall, catches on one set of gears which allow the doors to open on each individual floor. The nylon cord goes taut.

BACK TO ELEVATOR

Silver hangs on as Batman hooks his arm around her. The two of them shoot upwards through the escape hatch.

ANGLE ON ELEVATOR

Still plummeting. It hits the ground with an ear-splitting, sickening crash.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

A WASHERWOMAN standing by the elevator doors, with her mop and pail, presses the "down" button. It opens.

ANGLE ON BATMAN

Batman and Silver hang by the cord in the shaft, her arms locked around him in a death grip. She stares, goggle-eyed.

BATMAN
(at Silver)
Next time - remind me to try the window.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Batman and Silver walk down a deserted street. She is a wreck - trembling, ripped dress, with streaks of cable grease on her face and hair.

BATMAN
I'm parked in the alleyway. Didn't want to attract attention.

SILVER
A bit late for that, isn't it?

Suddenly: THE ROAR OF ENGINES IS HEARD FROM THE SKY! Batman and Silver's heads snap up:

ANGLE ON PENGUIN'S GANG - THEIR P.O.V.

THREE PENGUIN CONFEDERATES whizz down at them through the night sky wearing jetpacks! Orange flames shoot out from behind their propelling rigs as they maneuver through the air, now heading into a synchronized power dive.

The Penguin hovers above, still supported by his whirling umbrella-copter.

A hail of MACHINE GUN BULLETS spews forth from guns mounted on top of their packs - the flyers close in on Batman and Silver like attacking fighter planes.

BACK TO BATMAN AND SILVER

Batman dives behind a row of garbage cans, pushing a screaming Silver down in front of him as the fusillade ricochets off the cans and building walls.

The flying formation zooms back up into the sky again, preparing to make another pass. Batman turns to a trembling Silver who is paralyzed with fear.

BATMAN
Stay here! It's me they want...

SILVER
Don't leave me!!

Batman turns and looks: she is a quaking mess.

SILVER (CONT'D)
Oh, please? I've been a pretty
cheap date so far.

BATMAN
(pause)
Let's go.

He takes her hand as they run into the alleyway.

ANGLE ON SKY

The Penguin's group have reassembled in a formation and start another power dive.

INT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

The screen is totally black. Suddenly - one glaring yellow headlight in the shape of an eye appears! Then another.

ANGLE ON ENGINES

Twin turbine engines fire up - their glowing red exhaust filling the screen.

ANGLE ON STREET

THE BATMOBILE screams from the alley out into the street. A sleek, powerful, futuristic panther of a car - jet black with a domed interior.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

The interior is a glistening, intricate maze of computers, screens, and complicated electrical systems. Silver's eyes are frozen open in astonishment. Batman looks over.

BATMAN
Please don't touch anything.

SILVER
Like the cigarette lighter?

Batman smiles, points it out. There is one.

ANGLE ON SKY

The Penguin and his three Jetpack Bandits zoom down at the car, their mounted machine guns BLAZING. Bandit #1 powers forward, spewing bullets as he comes.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

A succession of RICOCHET HITS on the Batmobile roof causes Silver to hunch over in terror as Batman flips a switch.

ANGLE ON BATMOBILE

The two coiled cylinders under either side of the car suddenly eject intersecting streams of blue light (the force field we saw tested in the Batcave) which now bathes the entire vehicle in a SOLID BLUE GLOW.

A new hail of bullets ricochets off the impregnable field of blue light, zinging back up into the air in the direction from which they came.

ANGLE ON BANDITS

Their face registering horror as several of their own bullets whizz by them, narrowly missing! They soar higher to avoid their own fire.

BACK ON BATMOBILE

Speeding down an avenue along the side of the park.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Silver looks over hopefully.

SILVER

I guess we frightened them off.

Batman shakes his head, flips another switch: A small radar screen lights up. Three blinking LIGHT BLIPS are still following them. Batman suddenly looks ahead, eyes widening.

ANOTHER CAR heads directly at them, guns blazing!

SILVER (CONT'D)

I think I'll keep my mouth shut.

ANGLE ON STREET

The HOOD CAR swerves off the street into the park. The Batmobile squeals into a 180 and roars after it.

ANGLE ON PENGUIN IN SKY

The Penguin watches from the sky with satisfaction.

PENGUIN

He's taken the bait...

He motions two Bandits to fly off in another direction, then: swivels in mid-air, points Bandit #3 down at the Batmobile.

PENGUIN (CONT'D)

The tires, you Cretin! Go for the tires!

ANGLE ON PARK ROAD

The Batmobile pursues the Hood Car through the park as Bandit #3 looms

up from behind, guns blazing.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Batman looks over at a terrified Silver reassuringly.

BATMAN
Don't worry...

SILVER
Worry?
(trying nonchalance)
How's the...ah...mileage on this?

BATMAN
It doesn't use gasoline.

SILVER
Of course not. Silly of me...

ANGLE ON BANDIT #3

Guns blazing down at the road behind the Batmobile.

ANGLE ON ROAD

A stream of bullets advances inexorably toward the rear tires of the Batmobile.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Batman realizes what's happening and presses a button.

ANGLE ON REAR OF BATMOBILE

Steel casings drop down over the tires as the bullets make contact too late, ping off them harmlessly.

ANGLE ON BANDIT #3

Whizzing along through the air behind the Batmobile, registering his frustration.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

BATMAN
Do you know what the number one hazard
is on the American road these days?

SILVER
(weak smile)
Surprise me...

BATMAN
Tailgaters.

ANGLE ON REAR OF BATMOBILE

The trunk of the Batmobile suddenly pops open! A giant horseshoe magnet swivels, pointing out behind the car!

ANGLE ON BANDIT #3

Screaming, wide-eyed, as the force of the powerful magnet spins him in mid-air and he is sucked into the trunk by his jetpack. The trunk closes on him, slamming shut.

ANGLE ON PENGUIN IN SKY

The Penguin looks down disgustedly, then lifts his gaze ahead and below, into the park.

EXT. PARK - ANGLE ON CURVE - NIGHT

A Bandit watches near a curve in the park road as the Hood Car roars by. He gestures impatiently off into the darkness.

Bandit #2 settles in behind a jest of rocks, trains an automatic weapon back down the road.

BACK TO BATMOBILE

Roaring through the park TOWARD CAMERA.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Batman looks ahead, suddenly worried.

ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD

Two blazing headlights seem to be speeding directly at him, growing larger by the second!

BACK TO BATMOBILE

SILVER
Hit the brakes! Hit the brakes!

Batman grimly steps on the accelerator!

ANGLE ON FRONT BUMPER

Now emerging from the front of the Batmobile: a long, black battering ram with a RAZOR SHARP GLEAMING STEEL TIP!

BACK TO VIEW THROUGH WINDSHIELD

The two oncoming headlights are about to make contact as:

WIDER ANGLE

The Batmobile EXPLODES though what was a GIANT MIRROR in a sea of

flying glass!

Bandit #2 lets off an ineffectual burst of automatic fire, now lowers his weapon in disgust as the vehicle roars on.

BACK TO PENGUIN IN SKY

Gritting his teeth in frustration, looking up ahead.

EXT. PARK - ANGLE OF BRIDGE OVER LAKE - NIGHT

The Park road curves onto a bridge which spans the park lake. The Hood Car speeds quickly across it.

ANGLE BELOW BRIDGE

A Bandit stands by a plunger-detonator device.

BACK TO BRIDGE

The Batmobile starts across at full speed. Suddenly - A HUGE EXPLOSION collapses the section of the bridge directly in front of it!

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Plummeting down through the air toward the lake. Batman works his controls frantically as Silver screams!

ANGLE ON LAKE

The Batmobile plunges into the lake! A brilliant SHOWER OF BLUE SPARKS explode across the water's surface as the vehicle disappears. For a moment, all is still.

ANGLE ON PENGUIN IN AIR

The Penguin looks down, "clucking" contentedly. His expression suddenly starts to change.

ANGLE ON LAKE - HIS P.O.V.

Slowly re-emerging on the surface of the lake: The Batmobile! Its roaring turbine engines propel it forward, now supported by TWO HYDROFOIL PONTOONS! The makeshift craft speeds over the water at speedboat velocity.

The Batmobile reaches shore, churning up chunks of mud as the pontoons contract and the car bounces onto the park road. The protective blue light has been extinguished. From either side: two Hood Cars approach, machine guns blazing!

Batman swerves the Batmobile onto the grass, roars cross-country toward a park exit as the hail of bullets begins to make CRACKS across its protective dome.

ANGLE ON PARK EXIT AND STREET

The Batmobile speeds out into the street. One Hood Car is in hot pursuit - the other exits the park a block ahead and roars at the Batmobile from the other direction!

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Silver looks over at Batman, trembling, as more bullets "chunk" into the car dome, weakening it further.

SILVER

Listen...it was nice of you to offer to take me home, but maybe I'd better grab a cab...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The Batmobile is about to become a sandwich as Batman suddenly squeals the vehicle into a parking building! The Hood Cars do respective 180's and follow suit.

INT. PARKING BUILDING - NIGHT

The Batmobile roars around hairpin turns, ascending the levels of the parking building like a sportscar.

The Hood Cars screech after him, gaining speed. They pursue Batman higher and higher, threading the narrow openings through the lines of parked cars, tearing off side mirrors, doors, and fenders on their way by.

ANGLE ON HIGHER LEVEL

The Batmobile, reaching the level just under the roof, squeals around a corner, catches the fender of a parked car, and spins out of control!

Batman slams on the brakes as the Batmobile skids and turns to face:

The two Hood Cars, which have stopped so that they are completely blocking off the exit ramps, up and down. The OCCUPANTS stare in amazement as the Batmobile suddenly roars at them!

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Batman's jaw sets as he looks forward.

ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD

A sign at the bottom of a narrow ramp leading to the roof screams in red letters: WRONG WAY - DO NOT ENTER - SEVERE TIRE DAMAGE!

BACK TO PARKING LEVEL

The Batmobile shoots up the wrong-way ramp!

CLOSE OF METAL TEETH

As the Batmobile's tires make contact with the viciously protruding

metal teeth - ALL FOUR TIRES BLOW! The vehicle roars on, flub-a-dubbing up toward the roof.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

The Batmobile exits onto the roof as the two Hood Cars, appearing from the proper ramp, fan out to flank it.

ANGLE ON PENGUIN IN AIR

The Penguin takes up a position in mid-air just above and past the roof, "clucking" with glee as he sees the Batman is hopelessly trapped.

BACK TO ROOF

The two Hood Cars close in on the Batmobile from either side. Batman is running out of room.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Silver looks through the windshield in despair!

ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD

The edge of the roof looms up rapidly!

SILVER'S VOICE
Oh, my God!

She looks over at Batman whose JAW SUDDENLY TWITCHES!

EXTREME CLOSE ON SILVER

She has seen his jaw twitch! She stares in disbelief, realizing the implications.

SILVER
(whisper)
Oh, my God...

BATMAN
Hang on!

Batman presses a RED BUTTON!

EXTREME CLOSE ON EXHAUST

The Batmobile's twin turbine engines EXPLODE WITH A WHITE FLAME! Jet-propelled afterburners ignite!

WIDER ANGLE

The Batmobile has reached the edge of the roof, now LAUNCHES ITSELF into space in an upwards arc!

The two Hood Cars are unable to cope with the sudden void between them

and crash head-on with a sickening crunch!

ANGLE ON PENGUIN IN MID-AIR

Staring in total shock - frozen in mid-air as the Batmobile arcs up toward him.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

The figure of the Penguin grows rapidly larger through the windshield.
BATMAN HONKS AT HIM!

BACK TO MID-AIR

The Penguin takes a panicked, last-second evasive action, diving low as the Batmobile streaks by:

The white-hot turbine flames from the vehicle's exhaust sear the top of his umbrella-copter's whirling ribs, MELTING THEM INTO DISFIGURED CURLEQUES!

The Penguin looks up in despair as his umbrella-copter begins to spin out of control. He gives a birdlike SCREECH, then zig-zags helplessly through the air!

BACK TO BATMOBILE

The sleek vehicle completes its downward arc through the air and lands on the roof of the building across the street.

EXT. GOTHAM SKY

The Penguin cartwheels end over end through the air, his umbrella-copter sputtering.

INT. RICH APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dozens of GUESTS surround a lavishly decorated banquet table in an expensive apartment. A Bar Mitzvah celebration is in progress. The proud FATHER puts a loving arm around his thirteen-year-old son.

FATHER

And so, Marvin, on this most special
of all days, your mother and I have
prepared a big surprise for you...

ANGLE ON SIDE OF APARTMENT BUILDING

The spinning, rudderless Penguin careens through an open window on the side of the apartment building.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The Penguin crash-lands on the end of the banquet table, sending food and Guests flying everywhere as he skids along, clearing it, finally splattering to a stop through an enormous pile of chicken livers into a mountain of cracked ice under a banner reading: TODAY YOU ARE A MAN.

The stunned Guests hesitate a moment, then burst into wild, unrestrained APPLAUSE!

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

The Batmobile sits parked on the roof where it landed.

INT. BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Batman looks over at Silver who has fainted dead away. She murmurs as he gently prods her.

BATMAN
Miss St. Cloud...Miss St. Cloud?

Silver's eyes flutter open, trying to regain focus.

BATMAN (CONT'D)
May I take you home now?

INT. SILVER'S HALLWAY - NIGHT

Batman and Silver stop at her apartment door. She smiles at him through smeared elevator cable grease.

BATMAN
I'm...very sorry for tonight. You must have been terrified.

SILVER
Well, I've thought of a way you can make it up to me.

Batman looks at her curiously. She suddenly kisses him, deeply. He allows it, unwilling or unable to pull away.

CLOSE-UP

Silver's eyes open. She knows - or thinks she does.

They break. Silver smiles mysteriously, whistles under her breath, enters her apartment.

INT. SILVER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

She leans against the door, sighs. Could it be true?

BACK TO BATMAN

On the other side of the door, worried. Does she know?

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

The quiz show The Joker Is Wild broadcasts before a live audience. A CONTESTANT stands by three large video panels in the shape of a slot machine.

JACK BARRY
All right, Otto, you've got two
thousand dollars. Spin the wheel!

Otto pulls a lever - the first panel screen lights up.

JACK BARRY (CONT'D)
Joker...
(next panel)
Joker...
(next panel)
Joker!

A burst of machine gun fire riddles the third panel to shreds.
Stepping through it - the Joker. An armed Gang rushes in after him,
holds Jack Barry and the audience at bay. The Joker steps to center
stage.

JOKER
Good evening, ladies and germs. I
Just flew in from Lost Wages,
Nevada, and boy, are my arms tired!

He giggles. There is a stony silence from the audience.

JOKER (CONT'D)
Gimme a break, folks, I'm a Veteran.
Man walks into a bar, says, "Have
you got any Wild Turkey?" Bartender
say, "No, but I can get a tame one
and irritate it for you."

He roars. The audience stares back. His eyes narrow.

JOKER (CONT'D)
But I digress. You see, I'm in the
process of developing a new series...
(evil smile)
...of killings. All original, all
different, believe me, folks, you're
gonna die laughing. And there's only
one man who can cancel my little show
the Batman. Because from now
on, each time he appears in public,
every time he's seen anywhere - one
prominent citizen of Gotham will die.
(to camera)
I'm tired of fighting you, Batman,
so the people are going to do it for
me. Either you lose...
(at audience)
or they do.

INT. WAYNE MANOR STUDY - NIGHT

CAMERA CLOSE on a television screen - the crackling face of the Joker

disappears.

Bruce flips off a VCR, looks over at a worried Alfred.

BRUCE

When did you tape this?

ALFRED

Not quite an hour ago.

Bruce rises, begins to pace.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Why can't you do what he did, Sir?
Go on television as the Batman, and
explain your case to the people.

BRUCE

And risk having an innocent human being
murdered for my sake? I can't chance it.

Bruce turns away in disgust, his mind racing.

ALFRED

(sympathetic)

Well...perhaps a night on the town
as Bruce Wayne might be therapeutic
for you after all. You do have
tickets for the gala opening of the
opera. I was planning on using one
myself, but if you'd prefer a more
lively and decorative companion I
quite understand.

BRUCE

You know what? It's been so long I
can't even think of whom to call
anymore.

ALFRED

Not even one name?

BRUCE

(sudden grin)

Well maybe just one.

EXT. GOTHAM OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Dozens of shiny limousines disgorged Gotham's formally dressed ELITE in front of the opera house. Photographer's flashbulbs indicate that it is indeed a gala opening. The billboard marquee advertises: I PAGLIACCI.

CAMERA PANS to one arriving limo and we hear a TELEPHONE RINGING over the scene. Silver's VOICE answers it.

SILVER'S VOICE

Hi. This is Silver. I'm not home right now, but if you'd leave a message at the "beep," I'll get back to you as soon as I can.

The limo pulls up to the front of the opera house. Silver exits in a shimmering evening gown. AT THE SOUND OF THE "BEEP" we see her escort: Rupert Thorne. They make their way inside past a battery of photographers.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

A maze of BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE mingles in the lobby, exchanging greetings and appreciative glances. An ARMY ARCHERD-type comments on the passing parade for local television.

ARMY ARCHERD
...I'm telling you, they're all here tonight, folks! Newsome two-somes, tiresome twosomes, from show biz, sports, politics...
(looks off)
There's millionaire socialite, Bruce Wayne!

ANGLE ON BRUCE

As Bruce makes his way through the throng with Alfred.

BACK TO SCENE

ARMY ARCHERD
(turning)
And here's a man for all seasons - Gotham's own City Councilman, Rupert Thorne!

Thorne slides up to Archerd with a hearty smile. Silver hangs back, suddenly spotting Bruce, surprised.

CLOSE ON BRUCE

Having spotted Silver too. Gazing in frustration.

BACK TO SILVER

She locks eyes with Bruce as Rupert slides his arm around Army Archerd's shoulder.

ARMY ARCHERD
I didn't realize you were an opera fan, Councilman...

THORNE
To tell the truth, I'm not, Army, but any elected official with as many Italian constituents as I have

would be darn well advised to give
it a try.

Rupert laughs heartily as suddenly: A HUGE COMMOTION is heard outside! MUFFLED GASPS give way to FRANTIC MURMURS, then local silence as: The Batman appears in the doorway!

Rupert stares, wide-eyed. Archerd blinks in disbelief as the Crowd parts and Batman enters the lobby.

CLOSE ON BRUCE

Frozen. He exchanges an incredulous glance with Alfred.

CLOSE ON SILVER

Totally taken aback. Her gaze flicks from Bruce to Batman to Bruce to Batman like someone watching a tennis match.

ANGLE ON GORDON AT TOP OF STAIRS

Gordon stands in a group at the top of the stairs to the mezzanine, looking down in dismay.

BACK TO SCENE

The Batman joins Rupert and Archerd at the microphone with a cold and distant air. (His resemblance to Bruce is uncanny.) Archerd swallows nervously.

ARCHERD

You're...taking quite a chance,
showing up in public like this,
aren't you, Batman?

BATMAN

The way I see it, we're all taking
quite a chance if we let a sick
criminal mind like the Joker paralyze
this entire community with fear.

An angry MUTTERING is heard from within the Crowd.

CROWD MEMBER

Sure. He's not the one who's
going to get killed...

Batman's head snaps around angrily at the remark.

BATMAN

Step forward and say that to my
face, if you've got the guts!

The Crowd hangs back, confused and frightened. More angry muttering is heard, now mixed in with boos.

CROWD #2

Get him out of here!

CROWD #3
Go home, Batman!

The boos grow louder and defiant, as Gordon hurries to the fake Batman's side and Thorne smiles thinly at the imposter.

THORNE
It seems you're not exactly the people's choice anymore, Batman...

GORDON
(at Batman)
C'mon. Let me get you out of here before these gentle people tear you up into little pieces...

Gordon leads a reluctant Batman away through the jeering Crowd. Bruce watches in horror with Alfred as the taunts continue.

CROWD #4
Leave us alone!

CROWD #5
I'm not getting killed for you!

ALFRED
(grim whisper)
A rather cruel sort of joke, wouldn't you say?

BRUCE
(nods coldly)
And I don't think we've heard the punch line yet.

Gordon appears in the doorway, raises his arms to quiet the panicking Crowd.

GORDON
Settle down, folks! Take it easy now! I've got half the police in this city on their way over here! So if you'll all take your seats...

CROWD #6
Is he crazy?

CROWD #7
Let's get out of here!

THORNE
(into mike)
Wait!!

There is a hush. A stern-faced Thorne plays to his audience for all he's worth.

THORNE (CONT'D)

What the Batman just did was inexcusable. Perhaps even criminal. But he's right about one thing. No cheap hoodlum is going to intimidate Rupert Thorne while I still have the saliva to spit on him! My ticket says seat E-6, and that's where I'm parking my keyster for the next few hours!

(pause; low voice)

And I call upon His Honor, the Mayor, to join me in the audience.

The Crowd looks over to the side of the lobby:

GOTHAM'S MAYOR emerges from a group of onlookers. A grey-haired man who is visibly terrified, he swallows hard.

MAYOR

Councilman Thorne is right, of course. And I expect every other decent citizen of Gotham City to stand up and be counted.

The Mayor silently starts up the stairs to the mezzanine. After a beat, Thorne theatrically extends his arm to Silver who hesitates, then reluctantly joins him. They start for the orchestra section as others in the Crowd begin to follow.

CLOSE ON BRUCE

Watching Silver disappear. His jaw twitches.

INT. OPERA MEZZANINE - NIGHT

Bruce and Alfred head for their box. The Mayor approaches from the other direction, now escorted by Gordon and a phalanx of Police. The Mayor sees Bruce and stops to shake hands.

MAYOR

It's good of you to stay, Bruce...

BRUCE

You've made a courageous decision, Your Honor. I hope it's the right one.

The Mayor nods grimly, enters his box. The Police form a guard by the door.

INT. BRUCE'S BOX - NIGHT

As Bruce and Alfred enter. Gordon stands in their box, a radio receiver in his ear. A loud ovation is heard.

WIDE SHOT - AUDIENCE

The audience is on its feet, facing away from the stage, applauding the Mayor in his box. The Mayor lifts his arms in a victory salute. The applause dies down. The lights dim. The Overture to *I Pagliacci* is heard, O.S. CAMERA RISES past the Mayor and his party to the hanging chandelier directly above him. The fixture consists of huge crystal teardrops.

EXTREME CLOSE ON CHANDELIER

One of the crystals is filled with a clear liquid.

BACK TO BRUCE

Bruce and Alfred settle into their chairs. Gordon mumbles into his radio receiver, ever watchful.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

INT. OPERA HOUSE - ANGLE ON STAGE

The Leading Man (CANIO), dressed as a clown, sings the aria "Vesti La Giubba". A passionate, sad piece. He kneels in front of a large gaily-painted drum.

ANGLE ON BRUCE

Alfred nods off in his chair. Bruce elbows him gently.

BACK TO CANIO

Approaching the high point of the aria. With a magnificent voice, he reaches for a "High C", hits it strongly and purely, holds on to the note.

ANGLE ON MAYOR'S BOX

The Mayor and his party exchange impressed glances. CAMERA PUSHES IN ON the chandelier teardrop. It trembles from the force of the High C - now cracks. The liquid drips down into the box.

BACK TO STAGE

The sad aria is ending. Canio is on his knees, sobbing. He sings pianissimo, milking every heart-breaking second. Suddenly - O.S. - a chuckle. Then the sound of laughter. Canio peers angrily into the audience.

ANGLE ON AUDIENCE

Confused, then irritated, as the laughter grows louder.

ANGLE ON MAYOR'S BOX

The Mayor and his Party guffaw loudly, pounding their chairs in glee.

ANGLE ON BRUCE

Bruce rises from his seat, concerned.

BACK TO MAYOR

Tears of laughter stream down the Mayor's cheeks. He is on his feet now, totally out of control. The others flop over their chairs, roaring helplessly.

BACK TO CANIO

He walks off the stage in disgust.

BACK TO MAYOR'S BOX

With a sudden, final burst of insane giggling - all four men collapse. The Mayor hangs over the edge of his box, dead - a grotesque grin frozen on his face.

ANGLE ON AUDIENCE

Gasp. Panicking. As:

ANGLE ON STAGE

The huge clown drum suddenly rips apart from the center. The Joker steps out, dressed as an obese soprano.

JOKER

Wait! The opera's not over till the fat lady sings!

The Joker hits his own version of a High C as:

GORDON'S VOICE

Open fire!

The lights go out. Gunfire and screaming are heard in the darkness. Total pandemonium.

INSERT SHOT - GOTHAM TRIBUNE

The Gotham Tribune cartwheels into frame: CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME MAKES GOOD ON BOAST. Rupert Thorne appointed acting Mayor. In the center of the page: a large photograph of the Batman with the caption: A KILLER?

INT. BATCAVE - WIDE ANGLE - DAY

Bruce paces dejectedly, a tiny figure lost in the vastness of the enormous cavern.

ANGLE FROM STAIRS

Alfred watches sadly from the top of the stairs.

BACK TO BRUCE

Still pacing. Thinking. He passes the huge crime computer, pauses, looks down, punches some keys.

ANGLE ON COMPUTER SCREEN

A series of CRIMINAL MUG SHOTS flashes across the screen, law-breakers of every variety, finally stopping at:

The face of the Joker - grinning down menacingly.

BACK TO BRUCE

Staring back. Face set. Jaw twitching.

The screen suddenly goes blank.

WIDER ANGLE

Alfred has turned off the computer. Bruce stares numbly.

ALFRED

Sir, I...

(swallows)

Perhaps...this isn't the only way.
Perhaps this is all meant to signal
a...a new beginning for you. After
all, you're an intelligent,
enterprising young man with every
capability in the world to...

Bruce puts his hand on Alfred's shoulder.

BRUCE

I...know you love me very much, and I'm
deeply grateful, but I wish you'd get
out of here now, and leave me alone.

Alfred pauses, then nods, walks off dejectedly.

CLOSE ON BRUCE

He wanders through the cave with glassy eyes, passing a table near the Batmobile. On it - a new version of the battering ram. Bruce picks it up, smiles bitterly, carries it in one hand as he continues to wander, passing the crime lab section.

Suddenly - he lashes out - sends the battering ram flying through a set of glass beakers filled with chemicals. Swinging it wildly now, he destroys a section of the crime lab, then sinks heavily into a chair, head bowed.

EXTREME WIDE ANGLE

The cavernous Batcave. The tiny, slumped figure of Bruce.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - WIDE ANGLE - DAY

The hot noonday sun drenches the spacious grounds of Wayne Manor. Seen running along a track cut on the periphery of the estate: the solitary figure of Bruce Wayne.

INT. WAYNE MANOR LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alfred watches from the window, concerned, as O.S., the TELEPHONE starts to RING.

EXT. RUNNING TRACK - DAY

CAMERA CLOSE on Bruce's grimly determined face, oblivious to the rivulets of sweat which pour down freely. His body is encased in several layers of exercise clothes, deeply stained by perspiration, that turn him into a human pressure cooker. His legs churn like disassociated pistons.

BACK TO ALFRED

The telephone continues to RING. Alfred turns, still distracted by the sight of Bruce and answers it.

ALFRED
(into phone)
Mr. Wayne's residence...I'm sorry, he's not available...No, as I told you previously, I don't know when that would be, but if you'd care to leave another message...

INT. CITY HALL OFFICE - DAY

CAMERA CLOSE on the door to an inner office marked: Special Assistant to the Mayor - Private.

The door opens as Silver exits into her outer office, followed by several NEEDY-LOOKING CONSTITUENTS.

SILVER
...I'll take it up with Mayor Thorne. Gotham needs an effective network of daycare centers, and tomorrow night's charity opening of the circus seems like a good place to start.

The Constituents thank her profusely. Silver crosses to her SECRETARY's desk with a hopeful look.

SILVER
Any luck?

SECRETARY

Nada. Mr. Wayne seems to be
permanently...unavailable.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

Wayne Manor seems deserted under the glow of the moon.

ANGLE ON BRUCE IN POOL

The Olympic-sized Wayne Manor swimming pool is illuminated by the glow of outdoor lights. In it: Bruce swims laps, knifing through the water with powerful strokes.

EXT. POOL - CLOSE ON BRUCE - NIGHT

Bruce churns through the water, eyes glazed with a total single-mindedness. His speed is Olympian. As he tilts his head to take another gulp of air, he suddenly stops dead in the water as he sees:

ANGLE ON SILVER - HIS P.O.V.

Silver emerges from the darkness, her glistening hair cascading down over an evening dress. She carries a wooden tray with two glasses of champagne on it, smiles as she faces a stunned Bruce who stands waist-high in the water.

SILVER

You know, Bruce, you simply must
pick up your phone messages.

BRUCE

(careful pause)

If I did - what would they say?

SILVER

That we were supposed to have dinner
tonight.

Silver smiles, kicks off her shoes.

SILVER (CONT'D)

For some strange reason, I thought you
might suddenly have an evening free.

BRUCE

Silver...look...

(with difficulty)

I...hope you won't misunderstand
what I'm about to say...

SILVER

There aren't going to be any more
Misunderstandings between us, Bruce.
And I warn you.

Silver slowly and calmly begins walking down the steps into the pool, carrying the tray with her. The water rises above the hemline of her evening dress, heading up for her waist as she advance toward as astonished Bruce.

SILVER (CONT'D)
I can be a very determined person.

Silver arrives at Bruce, the water now up to her chest, letting the wooden tray with the champagne float on the surface next to them. She hands him a glass, takes the other herself, raises it, stares deeply into his eyes.

SILVER (CONT'D)
So no more misunderstandings.

Bruce smiles in spite of himself, tosses back his champagne, then studies her unwavering gaze carefully. Flipping the glass over his head, he suddenly pulls her toward him, locking her in a passionate, hungry kiss.

They finally break. Silver purrs, whispers into his ear.

SILVER (CONT'D)
There...see what I mean about
misunderstandings?

BRUCE
No. What?

SILVER
Well just now - a moment ago - I
thought you were being rude, not
getting out of the pool to say hello.
(looks down; grins)
I didn't realize you weren't wearing
a bathing suit.

INT. BRUCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bruce lies naked under powder-blue silk sheets. A lovely hand comes INTO FRAME, gently strokes his cheek.

SILVER (O.S.)
When I think of how many nights I've
reached across an empty pillow, hoping
my hand would find that face...

Then - a shining mane of hair as Silver, also naked, wraps him in a tight embrace. They kiss.

BRUCE
There's so much to explain. And I'm
not quite sure I ever can.

SILVER

I don't need explanations. I just want whatever it was to evaporate. to simple disappear...

She rolls over, looks at him carefully. A Police siren is heard faintly in the distance. Bruce blinks.

SILVER (CONT'D)
Did you ever meet him?

BRUCE
Who?

SILVER
The Batman.
(smiles)
Every time I hear a siren. I think of the Batman.

BRUCE
I...ran into him a few times. Here and there.

Silver smiles down tenderly, studying him.

SILVER
You know...that night at the opera. I never believed that the real Batman would show up like that in public - not when he knew someone else's life was on the line.

BRUCE
(deadly stare)
You're right. He wouldn't.

Bruce suddenly breaks eye contact, unsure if she thinks she's talking about Batman or to Batman.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
You...met him too one night, didn't you? Commissiner Gordon told me he took you home or something.

SILVER
(smiles; remembers)
Or something.
(pause)
What can I say? He was dashing, resourceful, strong - very sweet in his own special way - all the things you'd expect from the Batman.
(grins)
The next morning I told Rupert I'd fallen madly in love with him.

BRUCE

You don't say.

SILVER

(penetrating gaze)

And what's more - I told Rupert I
was sure that the Batman...had
fallen in love with me.

They look deeply into each other's eyes. Silver smiles.

BRUCE

I...think I'm jealous.

SILVER

I think I'm in love.

They wrap themselves in each other passionately.

EXT. GOTHAM CIRCUS GROUNDS - NIGHT

A billboard: THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH. Featuring - The Flying Graysons. All new spectacular extravaganza - THE GLORY THAT WAS ROME. Past the billboard is a maze of smaller tents for sideshows, the housing of animals, etc. Past the - the big top itself.

CAMERA PANS the arriving SPECTATORS, Bruce and Silver among them. They are surrounded by mothers and children.

BRUCE

It's almost immoral, you know.
Going to the circus without bringing
your own children along.

SILVER

Don't worry. I've made plans for
the next time.

Bruce looks over, alarmed. Silver grins.

SILVER (CONT'D)

Lighten up. My sister has two kids.

INT. BIG TOP - NIGHT

A major parade (The Glory That Was Rome) is filing out. Pretty GIRLS in togas ride elephants. Handsome CHARIOTEERS drive by, GLADIATORS with trained bears, etc.

RINGMASTER (V.O.)

And there you have it, ladies and
gentlemen, The Glory That Was Rome!

ANGLE ON AUDIENCE

Bruce and Silver sit in the audience applauding. He eats popcorn. She

munches on cotton candy.

ANGLE ON BIG TOP ENTRANCE

A dozen CLOWNS of every shape and variety run into the arena, squirting water at each other through toy guns, roughhousing, doing pratfalls, etc., all to the delight of the Crowd.

ANGLE INTO ARENA FROM TUNNEL

Inside an entrance tunnel, CAMERA HOLDS behind the outline of a black-cowled head with pointed ears! The head lowers OUT OF FRAME, then reappears, this time covered by a CLOWN MASK!

The Clown Figure hurries out of the tunnel, wearing a floor-lengthed granny dress.

BACK TO ARENA

Several of the other Clowns have dispersed, running up into the audience as a DRUM ROLL is heard. The Granny Clown edges over toward the cage containing the big cats.

BACK TO BRUCE AND SILVER

One Clown runs up the aisle past them with what seems to be a bucket of water, spots Silver, flings the contents of the bucket at her! Bruce and Silver flinch as a SHOWER OF CONFETTI blankets them to general laughter and applause.

RINGMASTER (V.O.)

Now let me direct your attention to the trapeze and high wire. Out stars of the evening - The Flying Graysons!

ANGLE ON GRAYSONS

A family of aerialists. The older Graysons, trim and athletic, stand on one platform. Their son, DICK, stands on the other. He is in his middle teens, a handsome young man in immaculate physical shape. He takes hold of a trapeze, swings down.

ANGLE ON STANDS

The Clown who poured the confetti on Bruce and Silver watches through pancake makeup with more than a passing interest. Protruding from underneath a large silly hat: we see the edges of a startling green shock of hair.

ANGLE ON DICK

Dick Grayson swings on the trapeze in a long, powerful arc, executes a difficult flip into the arms of his father.

BACK TO BRUCE

BRUCE
Remarkable. That young boy's one of
the greatest natural aerialists I've
ever seen.

SILVER
Oh? I didn't realize you were so
familiar with the sport.

Silver gives Bruce a sideways look which he avoids.

RINGMASTER (V.O.)
And now Dick Grayson will attempt to
perform the incredible "Quadruple!"
Without a net! He is the only flier
in the world to accomplish this feat!

ANGLE ON DICK

A DRUM ROLL is heard. Dick swings down, picking up momentum, then back up, then down again. On his third pass, he tries it: revolves dizzyingly - MAKING FOUR COMPLETE SOMERSAULTS IN MID-AIR! (Note: There is, actually, only one person in the world who can do this, with Ringling Bros.) Dick completes the impossible feat to wild applause.

ANGLE ON BRUCE AND SILVER

On their feet, applauding enthusiastically with the Crowd.

ANGLE ON CLOWN (JOKER)

The Clown (Joker) giggles under his breath, lifts one billowing sleeve of his oversized costume, begins to unbutton it.

RINGMASTER (V.O.)
The Graysons will now perform their
world-famous maneuver on the high-
wire - passing each other and
exchanging positions - all without
a net!

BACK TO BRUCE AND SILVER

Both staring up, wide-eyed.

ANGLE ON GRAYSONS

The older Graysons stand at either end of a high wire some seventy feet off the ground. They each hold a long balancing pole, now start forward toward each other.

ANGLE ON DICK

Dick looks up from below, nervous but proud.

RINGMASTER (V.O.)
The slightest vibration - the

tiniest misstep - could send them both plunging to their death.

BACK TO GRAYSONS

Inching forward toward each other along the taut wire, using their balancing poles for support.

ANGLE ON JOKER

All eyes are riveted on the Graysons. The Joker opens the billowing sleeve of his clown costume. Popping out: A LIVE FALCON. It hesitates, then takes off!

BACK TO GRAYSONS

They're face to face now, on the wire, preparing to pass each other above the hushed Crowd. Suddenly - the falcon flies into view, lands heavily on one end of the male Grayson's pole with a SHRIEK! The surprised man teeters - the wire trembles - the falcon suddenly flies at his face! Both Grayson's tumble off the wire together, plummet downward.

ANGLE ON DICK

As his parents hit the ground heavily in front of him.

ANGLE ON BRUCE AND SILVER

Silver screams in horror. Bruce stares unbelievingly.

ANGLE NEAR BIG CAT CAGE

Suddenly: the Granny Clown standing by the big cat cage rips his mask away! The dress falls to the ground, revealing:

THE BATMAN!

QUICK CUTS

1. The Crowd gasps.
2. Bruce gapes in disbelief as Silver watches him.
3. Dick Grayson looks over from the bodies of his parents.
4. The Joker grins.

CLOSE ON BATMAN

The Batman stares coldly, speaks in a icily clear voice.

BATMAN

I've risked my life to help this city. I stood up for what I knew was right because I thought you people were willing to stand with

me. Well, now you can pay for your cowardice. Now I don't care how many have to die.

ANGLE ON BRUCE AND CROWD

An angry MURMURING rumbles through the Crowd.

CROWD #1
Stop him!

CROWD #2
Don't let him get away!

Bruce vaults into the aisle, lunges down the steps after the fake Batman as:

CLOSE ON JOKER

The Joker takes off his huge clown nose, throws it into the arena - a giant smoke bomb!

All over the arena, OTHER CLOWNS follow suit. The big top has become a scene of impenetrable chaos as:

THE FAKE BATMAN OPENS THE DOOR TO THE BIG CATS CAGE! Lions, tigers, et al., bound off their perches for freedom, rushing out of the cage to the SCREAMS of the Crowd.

The fake Batman disappears into an enveloping wall of smoke.

ANGLE ON BRUCE

Knifing his way through the panicked Spectators, lunging through the smoke after the fake Batman.

ANGLE ON SILVER

Silver stumbles after Bruce through the pandemonium, reaching the empty cat cage, gasping for breath with teary eyes.

SILVER
Bruce...? Bruce!

BACK TO BRUCE

Nearby. Spotting her. Eyes widening in horror!

BRUCE
Silver, look out!

ANGLE ON SILVER

A HUGE TIGER SNARLS, preparing to spring at her! It launches itself into mid-air as:

Bruce flies at Silver from the other direction, pulling her down to the

ground as the enormous cat sails over them, banging its head into the cage bars, knocking itself senseless.

Bruce pulls Silver to her feet, wraps a protective arm around her, leads her off through the smoky panic and confusion.

ANGLE ON DICK GRAYSON

Dick kneels protectively over the bodies of his parents, oblivious to the insanity around him. Spectators and Animals rush past in all directions as he removes his aerialist's cape, then gently covers the faces of his Mother and Father.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CIRCUS GROUNDS - NIGHT

CAMERA LOOKS DOWN on the aftermath. Police cars and ambulances everywhere. Smoke still drifts from the big top. Dazed PATRONS mill around looking for lost family members.

ANGLE NEAR BIG TOP ENTRANCE

Silver emerges from a medical tent marked by a red cross, sporting a heavily bandaged hand. She spots Alfred and the Rolls Royce near the entrance to the big top, walks over.

SILVER

The doctor says no more crap games
for a week or so, Alfred...

(stops; looks)

Where's Bruce?

ALFRED

(hesitantly)

Mr. Wayne wondered...if you'd be good
enough to let me drive you home.

SILVER

Drive me...

She looks off into the big top:

ANGLE ON BRUCE - HER P.O.V.

Bruce stands motionless in the dark shadows at one end of the tent. He stares across the arena:

ANGLE ON DICK - BRUCE'S P.O.V.

Dick Grayson sits alone in the corner, head bowed.

BACK TO BRUCE

Bruce's eyes are filled with tears.

BACK TO SILVER

Silver watches, somehow feeling the deep significance of the moment without the specifics. She turns to Alfred quietly, nods, gets in the car.

INT. TENT - CLOSE ON DICK

Dick is slumped, his head still bowed. Tears roll down his cheeks. Suddenly - a dark shadow inches across his face, almost blacking it out. He looks up.

Bruce stands over him, peering down, looking deeply into him with a mesmerizing stare.

BRUCE

What will you do now, son?

DICK

I...don't know. They were my only family. I...I...

He bursts into tears. Bruce grabs him, holds him tightly.

BRUCE

I know exactly how you feel, son. You may not believe that - but I do.

Bruce gazes down darkly, almost hypnotically, his eyes revealing the truth. Dick looks up slowly, riveted.

Suddenly: WE HEAR the sound of ANGRY MURMURING from a CROWD - then, the RAPPING of a Judge's gavel, silencing them.

INT. GOTHAM COURTHOUSE - DAY

CAMERA PANS DOWN from the symbol of Justice with her scales, painted on the Gotham Courthouse ceiling.

JUDGE (O.S.)

I find you guilty of wanton negligence against society. Of knowingly causing the death of an innocent human being.

A black-robed JUDGE reads the verdict to a courthouse full of SPECTATORS, but an empty defense table. The witness chair is also empty. Alone at the prosecution table - Rupert Thorne.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

Of usurping the authority of those legally sworn in to uphold law and order. The time has come to be rid of you and your reckless vigilantism.

Bruce and Gordon sit in the front row. Bruce's eyes reveal more emotion than he would care to. The Judge turns to face the empty witness chair.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
Batman - you have been tried in
absentia and found guilty of murder.
You are sentenced to death.
(looks)
Mayor Thorne...

Thorne rises, pompous and grave.

THORNE
Your Honor, this is a tragic day in
the history of Gotham. A once-
admired champion of the people has
now become a threat to their very
existence. A lethal weapon dealing
in indiscriminate death. Therefore,
to prevent further carnage, I've
instructed Commissioner Gordon and his
department to bring in the Batman by
whatever means necessary.

Thorne sits. The stunned Spectators begin to murmur loudly.

GORDON
The Batman. A killer. Who'd
believe it...?

BRUCE
I still don't.

GORDON
Bruce I deal in facts. And the simple
fact is - you're looking at one poor
sonofabitch who made a deal with the
devil.

Bruce stares blankly at the witness chair. The Judge pounds his gavel
for silence. CAMERA ZOOMS IN on the gavel.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SECOND COURTROOM - DAY

CAMERA PULLS BACK from another gavel rapping in another courtroom,
revealing the face of a more benign JUDGE.

JUDGE #2
...therefore, by the power invested
in this Court...

WIDER ANGLE

Bruce and Dick Grayson stand facing the Judge.

JUDGE #2
I hereby declare Richard Grayson to

be the legally designated ward of
Mr. Bruce Wayne.

(smiles)

And may I add in passing - you're a
very fortunate young man.

BRUCE

Thank you, Your Honor. I'm aware
of that.

JUDGE #2

I meant...

Bruce turns to Dick, grins broadly.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - DAY

The Rolls Royce pulls up in front of Wayne Manor. Alfred hurries to open the front door as Bruce and Dick exit the car. Dick stares up at the sprawling residence in awe.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - DAY

As Dick enters with Bruce: the towering hallway of Wayne Manor is filled with balloons and a banner reading: "WELCOME HOME, DICK." Silver grins down from the staircase.

Dick drinks it all in, slightly uneasy and embarrassed. He wanders into the enormous living room, unsure, visually adjusting himself to his new, outsized life.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - DAY

CAMERA PANS ACROSS a fully outfitted trapeze and ring set on the lawn of Wayne Manor. Bruce gazes up proudly at it, looks over to Dick for his reaction.

Dick looks up at the apparatus somewhat apprehensively, then flashes Bruce a self-conscious smile. Bruce understands, claps a hand on his shoulder, leads him away.

EXT. POOLSIDE - DAY

Dick lies sunning himself on a chaise by the pool. Suddenly, a large, wet beach ball lands on his stomach. He pops up, looks off toward the pool:

Bruce and Silver laugh from inside the pool, gesture at Dick to come and join them. He gives them a half-hearted smile, shakes his head, then tosses the ball back.

Silver looks at Bruce with concern.

INT. WAYNE MANOR DINING ROOM - DAY

Dick toys with his food at lunch, looks over nicely at Bruce who is talking non-stop from across the table.

BRUCE

...later on we'll pick up Silver and
go to that new magic musical
everyone's talking about. We can't stay
out too later - don't forget we've
for that doubleheader tomorrow...

DICK

Sounds great.

BRUCE

(pause)

Is something wrong, Dick?

Dick lowers his eyes, not wanting to respond.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

We're all trying just a little too
hard around here to make you feel at
home, right?

DICK

(with difficulty)

It's not that. You've been wonder-
ful to me. It's my fault you've
had to try so hard. It's...

(eyes misting)

It's just that I still hurt so much
sometimes...and then I remember, and
I get so filled with...hate again.

BRUCE

Hate?

Dick's eyes harden. His face sets with a cold look, not unlike that of a young Bruce Wayne when he faced Joe Chill.

DICK

I made a promise to myself the day my
parents died. A promise that someday
-- somehow - I'm going to keep.

Bruce's eyes flick over carefully.

BRUCE

What did you promise?

DICK

I'm going to kill the Batman.

There is a long silence. Bruce smiles tentatively.

BRUCE

That's a pretty tall order.

DICK

We'll see. I have the rest of my life to get it done.

BRUCE

What if he's...skipped town? Given the whole thing up? Died, even. No one ever knew who he was in the first place. You can't dedicate your whole life to killing a ghost.

DICK

I thought you'd understand when you told me how your parents were killed. Didn't you feel the same way?

BRUCE

(avoiding his gaze)

Well I was younger than you are, and...

DICK

(pressing him)

Didn't you hate? Didn't you want to do something about it?

BRUCE

(pause)

Yes. For a while. But then I...

(looks down)

...realized how fruitless it was.

DICK

Well that's not going to happen to me!

Dick rises from the table, looks over with total, piercing sincerity, his eyes misting over again.

DICK (CONT'D)

Listen, I'm...grateful for everything you've done for me - and for all you intend to do. But if you can't live with my promise, accept it, support it, even - then maybe we've both made a mistake.

(eyes glistening)

May I be excused now?

Bruce stares back, deeply moved, almost whispers.

BRUCE

Yes. Of course you can.

Dick hurries out the door. Bruce grits his teeth, crumples up his napkin, squeezing it into a tiny ball.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Damn.

EXT. GOTHAM INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Rupert Thorne walks briskly down the street, hat tipped low over his face, coat collar turned up against the night wind. He arrives at a deserted intersection, checks the cross street signs, then glances down at his watch impatiently.

ANGLE ON SIDE OF BUILDING

Tucked under a high ledge of a nearby building: a mounted camera lens swivels, the moonlight glinting off its surface.

BACK TO THORNE

Rubbing his hands together. Looking around at the empty streets, irritated.

JOKER'S VOICE
You're late.

Thorne's head snaps around at the VOICE. He sees nothing.

JOKER'S VOICE
We shouldn't be seen together
anymore, Mr. Mayor. You can't afford
the risk.

Thorne stares: the Joker's Voice is coming from inside a short, standing mailbox on the corner.

Thorne hesitates, then slowly moves to the mailbox, tilts back the letter slot, mutters, looking around nervously.

THORNE
I feel like a Goddamn idiot...

INT. JOKER'S LAIR - NIGHT

The Joker speaks into a microphone attached to a tiny transmitting set.

A VIDEO SCREEN above shows Thorne standing by the mailbox.

NOTE: THIS SCENE TO BE INTERCUT AS REQUIRED:

JOKER
That's what I felt like twenty years ago, Thorne. When I decided to start off your political career with a "bang." Remember Thomas Wayne?

THORNE
(cold pause)
Every time I see his son.

JOKER

No regrets now, Mr. Mayor. It's taken me too long to maneuver us into a position of total control in this city. I've got the judges lined up, the public at your feet...

(cold pause)

You owe me, Rupert Thorne.

THORNE

It's a two-way street. Once I relieve Commissioner Gordon of his duties, you'll have a free rein in Gotham - less my cut. And now that it's legal to shoot the Batman...

JOKER

We have to find him first. So far, it's been like looking for a virgin in a maternity ward.

THORNE

Then don't find him. Let him find You.

JOKER

How? If the real Batman wouldn't even appear at the opera to save the Mayor...

THORNE

The Batman wasn't in love with the Mayor. He is in love...with a certain young lady. Or so she tells me and I've never known her to lie.

JOKER

What is she, a mute?

THORNE

(deadly)

Careful. You may be talking about the future Mrs. Thorne. I...want you to kidnap her.

JOKER

Now take my wife - please...

THORNE

The girl is not to be harmed. Once you've killed Batman and made your escape - I'll call the police and rescue her.

JOKER

Her knight in shining armor.

THORNE
Something like that.

JOKER

I underestimated you, Thorne. I always knew you were corrupt, but I had no idea you'd turn out to be such a delightfully repellent human being.

The Joker cackles insanely. Thorne spots someone coming, closes the slot, hurries off.

After a beat, an ANCIENT WOMAN approaches the mailbox with a handful of letters. She lowers the slot.

JOKER'S VOICE
(outraged)
Do you mind? I'll never get these pictures developed!

The Woman SCREAMS! Her letters go flying up in the air as she hustles down the street. The insane giggle of the Joker trails off into the night.

INT. SILVER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Silver is dressed in a lacy, powder-blue slip, exits her dressing room, combing her hair. The DOORBELL RINGS.

SILVER
(crossing)
Who is it?

VOICE
(through door)
Gotham Florists, lady. For a Miss St. Cloud.

Silver looks through the peephole.

ANGLE THROUGH PEEPHOLE

A DELIVERY BOY waits, head down, holding a bouquet.

BACK TO SCENE

Silver opens the doors slightly, sticks her arm out. The Delivery Boy thrusts the bouquet in her hand.

DELIVERY BOY
Say it with flowers...

SILVER
What a surprise!...

She inhales the aroma of the bouquet deeply. Her eyes become glassy.

She drops to the floor.

DELIVERY BOY
What a straight man!

He swings the door open. It is the Joker.

INT. POLICE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Thorne strides purposefully down the hallway, followed by a reluctant Sergeant Haley.

HALEY
...I don't know, Your Honor. I mean, you're the Mayor and all that -- but I work for the Commissioner.

THORNE
As of tomorrow morning, no one works for the Commissioner. I'm relieving him of his duties.

They have arrived at Gordon's door. Haley is shocked.

THORNE (CONT'D)
I assume you'll be staying on, Sergeant - as a loyal member of the force?

HALEY
I...hope to, Sir.

THORNE
Then open it.

INT. GORDON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Haley's key opens the door. They enter. Thorne looks around, spots the red phone connected to the Batcave.

THORNE
Anyone have the bright idea to run a trace on this.

HALEY
Yes, sir. First day it was installed. But all we ever got back was an echo of our own number. Guy's amazing, isn't he?

THORNE
Oh, he's a crafty one, all right. Thanks, Haley. That's all.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

Dick Grayson descends the darkened staircase, dressed in his pajamas.

He hears a NOISE, sees a light coming from the study.

INT. WAYNE MANOR STUDY - NIGHT

Alfred is tidying up the study, turns as Dick appears.

DICK

All right if I make a sandwich in
the kitchen, Alfred?

ALFRED

Why certainly, Master Grayson. If I
may be of help...

DICK

(grin)

I think I can handle it. Thanks.

INT. BATCAVE - NIGHT

Bruce sits at the computer, runs through a criminal history of the
Joker on the video screen. He pauses, looks off.

ANGLE ON BATPHONE

The red Batphone lights up, then dies. Lights up, then dies.

BACK TO BRUCE

Staring. Unsure.

INT. WAYNE STUDY - NIGHT

Alfred reaches to turn off the desk lamp. Suddenly, the light from the
lamp rises, then dies. Rises, then dies.

INT. GORDON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Thorne sits, Batphone in hand, waits.

BACK TO BATCAVE

Bruce crosses to the phone.

BACK TO STUDY

Alfred presses the button under the desk. The bottom drawer pops open.

BACK TO BATCAVE

Bruce picks up the phone, listens.

BACK TO GORDON'S OFFICE

THORNE

Batman?
(no reply)
Batman - if you're there - this is
Mayor Rupert Thorne.

BACK TO BATCAVE

Bruce listens silently, frowning.

BACK TO STUDY

Alfred holds the extension, listens in as well.

BACK TO THORNE

NOTE: THIS CONVERSATION TO BE INTERCUT BETWEEN THORNE, BRUCE, AND ALFRED AS REQUIRED:

THORNE
This...isn't easy for me, Batman,
considering what I've said and done
where you're concerned. But I love
Silver St. Cloud very much - and I
have reason to believe you do too.

Bruce and Alfred react in their respective locations.

THORNE (CONT'D)
I...dropped by to have a drink with
her tonight. The door was open,
there were signs of a struggle, and
she was gone. The Joker left a
playing card - addressed to you.

Bruce's face sets darkly.

THORNE (CONT'D)
"Dear Batman. Crime fighters may come
and go, but I carry on in the Great
American Tradition of violence. I'm
calling my little caper, Slaughter In
Silver. Sorry I have to run now.
Write if you get work."

Bruce's eyes narrow, thinking. Thorne's voice begins to crack
emotionally over the phone.

THORNE (CONT'D)
I...don't know where they took her
...or why the note was left for you.
I only know that Silver means more
than my life to me, and I beg you to
find her and save her. You're her
only chance, Batman, I...

Thorne's voice dies away theatrically. He hangs up.

BACK TO BATCAVE

Bruce hangs up, stares coldly. His jaw twitches.

BACK TO STUDY

Alfred hangs up in the study, worried.

BACK TO GORDON'S OFFICE

Thorne takes a deep breath, smiles, rises, exits.

INT. WAYNE MANOR KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dick has made his sandwich, closes the refrigerator door, starts off for the hallway.

ANGLE ON HALLWAY ENTRANCE

Dick enters the dark hallway, starts for the stairs as he sees:

ANGLE ON ALFRED - HIS P.O.V.

Alfred rushes out of the study, heading for the living room. He slips, falls heavily, picks himself up, oblivious to the pain, rushes into the living room.

BACK TO DICK

Watching. He starts for the stairs, then stops, now curiously heads for the living room himself.

INT. WAYNE MANOR LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dick enters, look around in amazement: Alfred is nowhere to be seen! His eyes scan the room for any other exit.

ANGLE ON GRANDFATHER CLOCK - DICK'S P.O.V.

The tall grandfather clock stands against one wall. A thin shaft of light seems to be emanating from behind it.

Dick advances to the clock, looks down, puzzled. It seems to be standing at a slight angle away from the wall. Exploring the edge of the clock with his hand, he starts to pull back. The clock swivels, revealing:

ANGLE DOWN INTO BATCAVE - DICK'S P.O.V.

The Batcave - with all its trophies, computers - in all its regal splendor. Alfred is standing near the gleaming Batmobile, looks off with concern.

Now emerging from the shadows - THE BATMAN! Dressed in his full regalia, heading quickly toward Alfred and the Batmobile.

BACK TO DICK

Staring down, his jaw slack. Stunned.

INT. BATCAVE - NIGHT

Batman crosses to Alfred, who stares with deadly concern.

ALFRED
Don't go, Sir.

BATMAN
Please get out of my way, Alfred.

ALFRED
Since when have you trusted Rupert Thorne? You don't even know where you're meant to be going.

BATMAN
The clues in the note were obvious. The "Great American Tradition" line? That's the name of this year's series of exhibits at the Gotham Museum. And "Write if you get work"? This month it's on American writers and Writing.

ALFRED
If the clues are that obvious, they must want you to come. It's a trap, can't you see that?

BATMAN
That boy up there thinks the Batman killed his parents. I told him he couldn't live his whole life chasing a ghost. What I realize now is - I can't live the rest of my life being a ghost.

BACK TO DICK

Listening at the top of the stairs. Thunderstruck.

BACK TO BATMAN

Batman puts an arm on Alfred's shoulder.

BATMAN
If I come back, old friend, I'll explain things to Dick. Tell him the truth and have the Joker to prove it.
(pause)
And if I don't - take care of him, Alfred. He'll be in much better

hands than he has been in mine.

Alfred silently steps aside as Batman enters the Batmobile, roars off through the cave.

Alfred pauses sadly, then turns back, heading for the staircase again. He looks up.

ANGLE ON DICK - ALFRED'S P.O.V.

Dick stands at the top of the stairs, staring down, grimly determined, his face carved in granite.

EXT. GOTHAM ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Batman's silhouette as he leaps and glides effortlessly across the tops of buildings.

EXT. GOTHAM MUSEUM - NIGHT

The deserted museum with the billboard: GREAT AMERICAN TRADITIONS. This month: American Writers and Writing.

EXT. MUSEUM ROOF - NIGHT

The museum roof is a network of vaulted glass skylights. TWO THUGS stand on a surrounding catwalk.

CLOSE ON CATWALK

A sharp metallic "ping" is heard across the catwalk.

BACK TO SCENE

The Thugs look up. One pulls a gun.

THUG
The Batman...

BATMAN'S VOICE
Count on it.

They wheel. Batman stands directly behind them. He grabs the first Thug, swivels him as the second Thug fires - killing his partner. Batman shoves the dead man into the second Thug, as both bodies crash down through the glass skylight.

INT. MUSEUM - UP ANGLE - NIGHT

The bodies explode through the glass, falling some sixty feet to the floor. Then - total silence.

BACK TO BATMAN

Staring down through the broken glass. Listening. He pulls a tiny revolver from his belt. A barbed metal dart sticks out of the barrel. Batman aims it through the hole, fires.

ANGLE ON MUSEUM RAFTERS

The dart embeds itself deeply into a rafter. Attached to it is a white nylon cord.

BACK TO BATMAN

Securing the other end of the cord. He hooks himself to it with a clip, glides through the opening in the glass.

BACK TO RAFTERS

Batman shoots silently along the cord to a rafter, lands gracefully, looks down.

ANGLE DOWN ON MUSEUM - HIS P.O.V.

Through the dim, eerie light. This exhibit (like the one including the giant penny) consists of huge, outsized version of everyday items. In this case - the tools of a writer's trade: enormous pencils, erasers, quill pens, fountain pens, ink wells, a ten-foot-high pencil sharpener, tall volumes of famous American novels, etc.

In the center of the display - a giant electric typewriter, some thirty feet wide. A huge sheet of blank white paper is rolled up on it.

BACK TO BATMAN

Staring down curiously through the silent darkness. His gaze starts to wander, then suddenly spots something.

BACK TO TYPEWRITER

A FIGURE attached to the typewriter now moves. It is Silver, hooked onto the ribbon near the center of the page. She moans, still recovering from the effects of the drugs.

BACK TO BATMAN

Eyes widening. He hooks one end of a nylon cord to a rafter, launches himself, swinging down toward Silver.

BACK TO RAFTER

A hand with a knife reaches out, slices through the cord!

BACK TO BATMAN

Now plummeting like a rock. He falls into the typewriter in front of Silver, his cape suddenly catching on something, partially ripping it, jerking him to a stop.

WIDER ANGLE

The lights are turned on. Emerging from behind or under the various exhibits: thirty or forty GOONS.

CLOSE ON BATMAN

Batman hangs helplessly from the circular element ball which prints out the characters on the page. His cape is caught on the projected edge of one of the giant letters. He stares ahead, unable to extricate himself.

ANGLE ON SILVER

The glaring lights have brought Silver back to consciousness. Hooked to the huge ribbon near the center of the page, she suddenly spots Batman across from her.

SILVER
(horrified)
Oh, my God...

WIDER ANGLE

Stepping out onto the end of the carriage - the Joker!

JOKER
I knew you'd drop in, Batman.
You're that type of guy.
(insane giggle)
Get it? Type?

The forty Goons circle in around the typewriter. The Joker nods to two of them.

CLOSE ON SWITCH

Two Goons give a mighty heave, flip the "ON" lever. A loud hum is heard as the typewriter activates.

ANGLE ON THORNE

Rupert Thorne hides in the shadows behind a large pencil box, watches the scene.

BACK TO JOKER

JOKER
You know, you're nothing to write home about, Batman - but let's give it a try.

The Joker points a gun down at the keyboard.

JOKER
What letter could be hiding under your cape? A "D", maybe?

The Joker fires:

CLOSE ON LETTER "D"

The bullet hits the letter "D", depressing it.

CLOSE ON BATMAN

The element ball carrying Batman shifts, hurtles toward the page with blinding speed. It "cracks" against the paper sharply, imprinting a "D". Batman's head has stopped mere inches from the page.

ANGLE ON SILVER

Eyes welded shut - terrified. The printing of the letter has advanced the ribbon. She is perilously close to the exact center of the page.

BACK TO JOKER

JOKER
Not the "D". Hmm. The most common letter is "E"...

BACK TO BATMAN

The Joker fires! Batman flies toward the page, this time nearly squashed on the other side. A giant "E" has been imprinted. Silver advances one more position on the ribbon.

JOKER (CONT'D)
An "A", maybe...

The element ball spins, hurtles toward the paper again. It splats into the page, narrowly missing Batman, pushing Silver along again. Immediately - another shot - the ball whizzes back, prints another "D".

JOKER (CONT'D)
I know I tried the "D" before, but I simply couldn't resist.

WIDER ANGLE

The message on the page reads "DEAD". The trembling Silver is only one letter away from being obliterated.

BACK TO BATMAN

Struggling, but helpless. His eyes flash nervously.

BACK TO THORNE

Alarmed as he sees what could happen to Silver.

BACK TO JOKER

JOKER
I know what letter is hidden under your cape, by the way. It's "B" - for Batman. But you see, I've got a problem. If I hit the letter "B",

Miss St. Cloud will die, and I
promised not to kill her.

BACK TO THORNE

Grim. Pulling a gun.

BACK TO JOKER

JOKER

To "B" or not to "B"...That seems to
be the question. Well, I suppose
promises - like laws - are made to
be broken.

VOICE

I made a promise, too, Joker. The
night you killed my parents.

QUICK CUTS:

Thorne looks up. Silver looks up. Batman looks up. The Joker looks up.

ANGLE ON ROBIN - THEIR P.O.V.

Dick Grayson stands high in the rafters.

DICK

I promised to wipe filthy crud like
you off the face of the earth.

JOKER'S VOICE

Shoot him!

There is a hail of gunfire as Dick flies down through the air toward
the typewriter.

Dick lands on the "TAB" key. The carriage releases, shoots across the
typewriter, carrying the Joker with it. He flies off the end, crashes
sickeningly into the wall, drops to the floor, unconscious.

Dick bounces off the "TAB", flies across the keyboard, lands on the
"SHIFT" key.

DICK

That ought to give you a lift,
Batman!

ANGLE ON BATMAN

The "SHIFT" swivels the element ball 180-degrees to expose the capital
letters. Batman is swung to the front, grabs the carriage, pulls
himself up, looks down as Dick launches himself into a pile of Goons
like a human dynamo.

BATMAN

Leave a few for me, son!

Batman leaps off the carriage, joins Dick in the fray.

NOTE: The fight which follows will be outrageous and thrilling, but should look physically believable. The Dynamic Duo will overpower the gang using the following elements and devices:

- A. Dick flinging Goons back into the pointed tips of quill pens.
- B. Batman lifting a fountain pen lever, firing a river of ink at an onrushing group.
- C. Both of them using springy, huge erasers as launching platforms.
- D. Oversized volumes of literature slamming shut on the villains.
- E. Enormous bookmarks and letter openers swung as clubs, knocking out three or four crooks at a time.
- F. Heavies being hurled into huge, deep ink wells, turning them sopping black wet, unable to climb out again.
- G. Dick bashing a pair of Thugs back into the side of the giant pencil sharpener. They slam back against the "ON" button, activating it.

During the chaos, Rupert Thorne has made his way down the typewriter's steel bar which holds the paper to the roller. He unhooks Silver, lifts her to safety.

SILVER
Rupert? What...

THORNE
Don't talk. Let's go.

The fight continues as Rupert and Silver run down the bar, drop off the typewriter, cross the floor through the furious melee, heading for the door. Batman rounds the corner of a giant book. Silver spots him, stops.

SILVER
Batman?...Batman!...

Thorne yanks at her. She tries to pull away, sees two Goons coming up behind Batman.

SILVER
Bruce! Look out!

Batman ducks, rolls, trips the Goons, knocks their heads together. Silver rushes toward him as Thorne pulls a gun, realizing.

THORNE
Bruce...Bruce Wayne...

BATMAN

Silver! Get away!

Dick has bashed a Goon backwards - he careens across the floor, hits Silver from the side, knocking her into Batman as Thorne fires.

CLOSE ON SILVER

Blood spurts quickly across the lacy back of Silver's powder-blue slip. Batman hooks an arm around her, stares into her dying face, struck dumb.

SILVER
(trembling)
I'm...right...aren't I...Bruce.

ANGLE ON THORNE

Horrified. He turns, runs.

ANGLE ON DICK

Giving chase. Dodging bullets as Thorne fires at him.

BACK TO BATMAN

Lowering Silver to the floor. She's barely breathing. Thorne's gunfire echoes through the museum. Batman's jaw twitches. His eyes flash with rage.

ANGLE ON DICK

Dick rounds the corner of a giant prop some ten feet high off the floor. Thorne waits for him on the next prop - gun poised and ready. Dick spots him, freezes.

THORNE
I don't know what part you play in all this, kid. But it's turned out to be a one-night stand.

BATMAN'S VOICE
(roaring with rage)
May God damn you, Rupert Thorne!

BACK TO BATMAN

Batman has placed a huge, viciously sharp thumbtack in a giant rubber band pulled taut. He lets it fly.

ANGLE ON THORNE

The thumbtack spears Thorne in the chest, topples him back across the prop - which is the giant pencil sharpener - he falls into the hole: A disappearing scream is cut short as Thorne is ground to death.

ANGLE ON BATMAN

Batman kneels, cradles Silver's head in his lap. Her eyes flutter open painfully. She tries to smile.

SILVER
Hello...Bruce...

He stares down, eyes filled with tears.

SILVER (CONT'D)
Maybe...it's better, you know?
I'd...just...get in the way...

BATMAN
(low whisper)
Don't...

SILVER
I could...never really have you, and
...I could never fall in love with
someone else.

Her eyelids tremble. One of his tears hits her cheek softly. She reaches up, gently caresses his chin.

SILVER (CONT'D)
Poor...darling...you're the one...
who's...left behind...

Her eyes close. Her face relaxes, dead. Tears stream heavily down Batman's cowl.

DISSOLVE THROUGH TO:

INT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

Commissioner Gordon supervises the aftermath and cleanup, The Joker, still groggy, handcuffed, is yanked along by a COP.

JOKER
Take it easy, okay? I get winded
opening clams.

He is led away. Gordon stares across the room.

ANGLE ON BATMAN

Batman stands by Silver's body which has been placed on a gurney. TWO PARAMEDICS cover her face with a blanket.

BATMAN
Wait.

They stop. He reaches in, pulls back the blanket, stares down at her face. Gordon has crossed to join him.

GORDON

What a Goddamn shame. You know
who's going to be really broken up
about this - Bruce Wayne.

Batman turns, glances at Gordon blankly.

GORDON (CONT'D)
They were real close, you know. Or
maybe you didn't.

Gordon turns, paces thoughtfully.

GORDON (CONT'D)
But at least you're back, I'm
back, and all's right with this
crazy world for a second. Now I
don't know where the hell this kid
they're talking about went to,
but...

He turns, looks. Batman has disappeared.

EXT. GOTHAM MUSEUM - DAWN

The gurney carrying Silver's body is loaded into an ambulance. It takes off, red lights flashing, siren wailing. The rising sun is just beginning to crack the clouds on the horizon. CAMERA WIDENS, STARTS TO RISE:

The ambulance becomes a tiny red dot as we now view the magnificent downtown section of Gotham.

CAMERA CONTINUES TO RISE, SHOOTING UP some eighty stories, then ninety, then one hundred, finally revealing:

WE DISSOLVE AS:

The dark, majestic figure of the Batman, standing on the top edge of the tallest building in Gotham. He looks down silently, cape billowing out behind him, a regal black prince surveying his steel and concrete realm.

Now swinging up and across from a nearby lower building:

THE IMPOSING, GRIM-FACED, COLORFUL FIGURE OF ROBIN! Dressed in his green shirt, red vest, flowing yellow cape and black mask, he lands on the roof noiselessly.

Batman's eyes acknowledge his presence without turning. Robin advances, then stops silently, several paces behind.

The DYNAMIC DUO has been joined. Both for now, and for the future adventures which await them in Gotham.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END